# The Golden Mountain

(J's material)

7/23/48

Plan: A loose. Make a sort of Story-teller's Holiday out of it, i.e. a semi-novelistic narrative.

Prologue: ~~Open with~~ J's room and what he sees from it. Take, possibly, his Easter Morning and Mr Saroyan as a starting point. Then proceed to the Shrimp shop, ~~an~~ with its gossiping old women and then the streets.

Bring in the figures whose lives are to be described in ~~three~~ four ways: ~~the reporter~~ what he sees from his window, what ~~he~~ he sees in the shrimp-shop, what the gossips tell him, ~~and~~ what he sees in the streets and what the story-teller tells him (The story-teller is to narrate the legends + beliefs. These latter (legends + beliefs) are to be interrupted at different places in some fashion or another.

Body of book: There should be fifty men + women in an Oakland-San Francisco environment.

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Prologue: For description of room of: Easter Morning + Mr. Saroyan: The Open Window pp. 1-3; 17-19½

There is a good deal about John's life in his My Life, Home Sweet Home and the five papers about his analysis of his own writings. (They are all clipped together).

For the Shrimp shop there are: The Shrimp War, About Shrimp + People; The Shrimp man + his wife; The Shrimpers.

2/28/'48

Suggestions:

Possibly it might be better to omit the fifth way (the story-teller) and insert a half-dozen to dozen myths in the life-narratives themselves. The folk-beliefs can all be so taken care of as, for instance, the excellent published The Ghost-Haunted Man and The Boy who Saw Him Low Work. Some of the life-histories (non-J's) have them. This however, should only be done for those of J's associates that deal with Chinese thoroughly steeped in old C. lore.

Better select what types to use for the folktales, what types to use for enunciation of the different viewpoints: the strict traditionalists, the compromisers, the "westernizers", the nationalists, etc.

For folktales: - 4 men + 2 women, if I use no more than, say 8 folktales. Otherwise say, for 12 folktales, use two more individuals.

If the book is to be 175000 words in length, with life-histories running to 5000 words apiece, leave circa 75000 words for Prose and interconnections. I may possibly need 35000 words. Under no conditions, however, have less than twenty people represented.

Book must include The Seventh Day Tragedy. Possibly begin the body of the book with this, at least, play with this idea. It may, however, be best to begin with the shrimp shop for there we have a history (J's uncle + his predecessor, a group of brown-shrimpers, - a gossip center, transient visitors, etc.), and a center from which events and the characterization of people can radiate.

The twenty life-history narratives should represent, if possible:

1. teacher 2. engineer (scientist) 3. prosperous merchant (take an example from Mrs J. sources) 4. herb or pulse-reading doctor. Get a description of latter's technique from some Chinese source). 5-8 men (those with peasant background. 9-12 men with non-peasant background; 13-20 women. Not in this order, of course. The emphasis, likewise, is to appear on some dramatic trait of the person's character. E.g. The man who never sleeps in a bed, the man who wished to be king, the woman who always played with water, the man who disliked work, the woman who died from over-eating, etc. The life-histories should also illustrate the different viewpoints.

How can I work in The Hag who thought she was in Hell? It's a very good phantasy of a second generation Chinese-American. I suspect it's a slightly novelized account (of either) a true happening or some (rumor/current) I think it should probably be one of the twenty stories. Probably will have to be amplified. Not necessarily, however, because Seventh Day Tragedy has 10000 words. For the Ghost-haunted Man I will add The Boy who saw Yin-Yang Way and another 1000-2000 word, preferably containing beliefs.

As I see it now it takes the following form:

Poem: (approximately 10000 words. Can be 15000)

| | |
|---|---|
| Seventh Day Tragedy | 10000 |
| Ghost-haunted Men | 6000 |
| Hag who thought she was in ~~Hell~~ Hell | 5000 |
| | [21000] |
| Re Wored as seen ~~Hell~~ from The Shrimp Shop | |
| [Have all the characters come in? They actually do, according to J.] | 10000 [46000] |

Most of the stories selected have 8 x 350 words = 3000. Will thus have to be expanded to twice their length. This should be done preferably in two ways: either had details from the other life-histories or insert folk beliefs & stories. I have in Golden Mountain about 18 etc. pages of folk beliefs (i.e. 9000 - 10000 words) plus 3000 printed ones, etc.

short story Post Office Tragedy Jonn Leyim
(Jon Lee)

The boy walked passed him many times, but never had the boy paid any attention to him.

He was an old man, fat and round, his pot belly sticking out full and big. His magazines stand was full of magazines, the lastest issues, and on the tables there were many newspaper.

Once the boy went into the post office to get some stamps, some two cents stamps, and some three cents stamps. It was then that he noticed the man with the pot belly. He sat on his chair, his eyes gazing out, very strange and peculiar. He was quiet, and once in awhile he felt the table with his hands, his fingers moving slowly here and there. The boy thought he was a little drazy, a little off his mind.

The boy could have forgotten completely about him. But one day the boy dropped in at the post office to get some penny postcards. He had a nickel left over, and he decided to get a magazine. He went over to the magazine stand, looked everywhere to find one he liked. There was a great variety of choice, but since he had but one nickel, his choice was limited. He finally took a Liberty up, and approached the man.

He came close to the man, but the man looked straight ahead, paying no attention to the boy. It was then that the boy noticed that the man's eyes were light blue, and immobile.

"May I have this magazine?" the boy said to the man.

The man turned around, feeling a little odd.

"Yes," said he.

The boy stretched out his hand, and gave the nickel to the man, but the man did not take it. The man put his fingers

on the table, feeling for something. He did not speak.

The boy noticed that the man's eyes were straight ahead.

He realized finally that the man was blind.

The boy put the magazine on the table, and the man felt along the top of the magazine, where there were little holes sticking up.

"Liberty, five cents," he said.

"Here's the nickel," the boy said.

The man picked up his nickel, and put it in his pocket.

Suddenly an idea struck the boy. He knew that the man could not see. So instead of picking up his Liberty, he took up an Esquire, a fifty cents magazine, and walked out of the post office. He did not know why he did, only he did it.

He walked quickly away, ashamed suddenly, afraid to put the magazine back, feeling strange and peculiar. He had never done a thing like that.

When he came down the steps, and into the streets, he was afraid to look back, for fear that someone was trailing him. He felt the man's cold blue eyes piercing behind his back. He crossed the street, and was almost knocked down by an auto, so absorbed was he in his thoughts. He felt the man's cold blue eyes piercing behind his back. He walked along for two blocks.

When he reached home, he went quickly to his room , opening the magazine to look at the pictures, and to read the stories. But he couldn't. Everywhere he laid his eyes on, he saw the cold blue eyes of the man with the pot belly.

The boy felt uncomfortable, bothered, troubled. He closed the magazine quickly, and went straight back to the post office.

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The boy put the magazine on the table, and the man felt

ight the top of the magazine, where there were little holes

"Mister, five cents," he said.

"Here," the man replied. " the boy said.

The man looked to his right, and put it in his pocket.

[illegible] . He knew that the man

could not see. A lesson of taking up his dexterity, he took

up any change, a fifty cent piece, and walked out of the

door of the office. He did not know why he did it.

He walked quickly away, entered another [illegible]

[illegible] peanuts. He had never

done a thing like that.

When he came down the steps, and into the street, he

was afraid to look back, for fear that someone was trailing him.

He felt the man's cold blue eyes piercing behind his back. He

crossed the street, and was almost knocked down by an auto, so

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eyes piercing behind his back. He walked along for two blocks.

When he reached home, he went quickly to his room , seeming

to look at the pictures, and to read the stories.

He couldn't. Everywhere he laid his eyes on, he saw the

cold blue eyes of the man with the pot belly.

The boy felt uncomfortable, bothered , troubled. He closed

his books, and went for light bread to the post office.

When he reached the ~~post~~ post office, he was afraid to go in, loitering around the street, walking around the block. He went up the stone steps once, then he came down again.

He finally made himself enter. He saw the man with the pot belly ~~###~~ sitting in his chair, his cold blue eyes still straight ahead. The boy looked around, and he saw many people at the magazine stand. He was afraid to put the magazine back.

He waited nearby for an opportunity to put it back. After ten minutes there was no one near the man with the pot belly. The boy walked by, then quickly put the magazine on the table.

The man with the pot belly said, "Is there something you wish?"

The boy felt a chill coming down his back. The man with cold blue eyes heard him come by.

The boy did not dare to look back, and he walked very fast, his steps making a loud noise on the marble floor. When he was out in the street, he began to run.

He knew that he could never go into that post office again. He was afraid of the man with the pot belly, and the cold blue eyes.

Jonn Leyim (Jon Lee)
334 Fifth Street
Oakland, California

short story

# We are the Homeless

I never told you about my friendship with Jake, did I? Well, it all happened like this quite casually and unintentionally. Let see, it was almost two years ago now.

I remember that day perfectly. There were four of us, Jake, a guy by the name of Bill, his brother Jack and I. The four of us were sitting inside the box car, on our way to Cal, to look for work. I had just jumped off another freight in the afternoon, and got on this freight car where Jake and the rest were staying. Well, I hadn't figured on jumping off the car except that darn conductor threatened to report me to the bulls. Huh, he didn't scare me a bit at all. Kept right on riding and riding, and I managed to hide in places where he couldn't find me. I just sneaked from one corner to another, and he would just look and look. Gosh darn it all, if I didn't have the darnest luck. He passed right by me again and again, can you imagine? Didn't see at all or nothing.

Well, as I was saying that afternoon the car drove into a small station on the countryside. I was inside my box car looking out into the other cars which had stopped nearby. Right across from me, I saw those three men, Jake, Bill and Jack. I went up to them, and I says, "Where you all going?"

Jake he was lying down on the floor of the car, and he says, "We're aiming to go to Cal, and maybe get a job there."

The one called Bill was sure a sight, his beard black around his chins, his small sharp eyes gleaming with silent mystery.

"Where're you heading for?" he says.

"Oh, nowhere in particular," I says.

He looked at me for a long time, then he says, "You not one of those newspaper guys coming here for trouble. We had enough trouble with those punks. Socked one of 'em not far from here."

"No," I says, getting afraid of this Bill. He was a big tall man, weighing at least over two hundred pounds, fierce and wild in looks.

His brother Jack was just as bad as he was, only he was silent, and he didn't talk much.

Jake he was the only one there that seemed friendly.

He was lying down on the floor, pale and weak.

"You sick?" I asks.

"Yeah," he says.

"Cold?" I asks.

He shook his head. He pointed to his heart.

"Oh, that," I says.

Jake was sure like a sight, his clothes all torn and ragged, his face thin and emaciated. He was all in, but he tried not to show it to anyone.

I climbed into the car.

"Cigarette?" I asks Bill.

"Sure," he says, taking one out for Jack, and one for himself. "I hadn't taste one of these since leaving New York."

He stuck it in his mouth quickly, and I lit a match.

"You from New York then?" I demands.

"Sure," he says.

"Where you from?" he says.

"Chicago," I says.

"I used to live in Chi," Jake says then.

"I live there all my life," I says, "but there's nothing doing there.

"You been on the road long?" Jake says.

"This is my first time," I answers.

Jake he looked up at me with a puzzled expression on his face.

"Your first time? Where are you going?" he asks.

"I dunno," says I.

He was silent.

Jack finished his cigarette. He remained silent all the time.

The train was starting to go, slowly picking up speed.

"Going to stay on, Kid?" Jake he says to me.

I nodded my head.

The train lurched forward, and then I could hear it picking up speed slowly, heading for sunny Cal.

## II

Well, that was my first meeting with Jake, and at that time I didn't think it was of any importance. It only goes to show that one can't tell people by their looks anyway, for Jake he turned out to be something quite different than what ~~we thought~~ we all thought he was.

He was not very strong we all knew that, and he looked poor and filthy. It was not till long afterward that W found

out he was a man with a lot of dough. And it was this dough too that got me into the mess with Bill and that brother of his too.

But anyway, I'm getting ahead of my story.

I joined up with Jake and the others, and for the first few days nothing much happened. We rodé from one city to another, one town to another, and still we were a long way off.

One night when Bill and Jack were asleep in the corner Jake he talked to me.

It was a rather hot night, and both of us could not sleep, what with no cold breeze in the car, and the rumbling of the train making a loud noise. But Bill and Jack were snoring like nobody business.

Pretty soon Jake he says to me, "What made you go on the road, Kid?"

"Oh, I really don't know," I says, "but there-there are so many things."

"How old are you?" Jake asks me.

"I'm almost twenty," I tells him.

Jake he sat up against the wall.

"What made you leave home?"

"I haven't no folks back there. My father he died a year ago. My mom she ran away with a hoofer. That's the last I saw of her. Since I got nothing to do back home, I went on the road."

Jake leaned close to me, then says in a very soft voice, "How're you fixed?"

"You mean money?"

He nodded.

"I ain't got nothing," I says to him."

Jake he almost whispered this to me, "If you need any dough, just ask for it. I got plenty."

Well, I was dumb struck for the moment, hardly believing my ears.

"You got money?" I gasps out.

Jake motioned me not to speak so loud. He says again, "If you need anything, just ask me." Then he says no more and he went back to sleep.

All that night I began to think of Jake, and what kind of a man he was. I was all puzzled and I can't figure out where he had all the money.

I looked over to see where Jake was lying down, and sure enough he was asleep.

III

Day again. The train was going quickly, and instead of the barren land we were now rapidly progressing toward the more fertile land. All ~~around~~ around there were thick trees and green grass. We could see the mountains in the far distance, purple and high. The sky was so blue that it was almost ~~blue~~ transparent like a clear lake in summer.

I got up and opened the door of the freight train a little. The fresh breeze came in, and I drew in deep breathfuls, feeling stronger and refreshed by it.

Bill and Jack were stirring, rubbing their eyes, stretching and yawning. But Jake he was still asleep, his thin chest heaving up and down.

Pretty soon Jake woke up, and he says, "Where are we now?"

"I don't know," I answers.

He stretched his arms, and coughed a little.

It was getting warm outside, so I opened the door of the freight car a little wider. The country sure looked swell all around us, green trees, and green grass not so far away.

We passed quite close to tall mountains, and the freshness of the country sure smells good. Jake and I, we drew in big breathfuls of air. At one place we passed over a bridge, and on the other side we could see flowers for an unlimited distance.

"Don't all this kind of get you?" Jake he says.

"I guess it does," I says.

"How about a smoke?" Bill puts in.

"That's going to be our breakfast, I think," I says.

I offered a cigarette to Jake. He didn't take it.

I felt a hungry feeling in my stomach, a biting and gnawing feeling.

I tightened my belt, and let it go at that.

"I feel thirsty," I says.

Jake he says then, "There's some water in the can there."

I looked over to the corner, and sure enough there was an old can filled with water.

I took a drink.

"Easy there," Bill says, "That's all we got." He shot

me a dirty look.

The train rumbled on. Jack remained silent, and I hadn't heard him speak a word yet. Sometimes he looked over on me, and says nothing.

By afternoon it was terribly hot, so hot that even with the door open, we had no comfort. Bill and his brother went to sleep, the heat making them drowsy.

I went over to Jake and says, "You told me you had money."

He turned around and look at the other two men.

"Yeah, but don't tell them about it."

"I won't," I says. "What is it, hot dough?"

Jake he looked at me, surprised, then he laughed.

"No, nothing like that." Then he continued after a pause, "Listen, Kid, I never told anyone about this, but I got dough, and plenty of it." He put his hands in his pocket, and took out two rolls of bills, and my eyes almost popped out just like the dickens. Whew, it sure was a lot of money. "This is honest money," he says, "and it all belongs to me. I'm going to spend it all."

"But why do you want to go on the road, if you're so well fixed?" I ### asks him.

Well, Jake he didn't say nothing for a minute.

"Listne, Kid," he says to me, "I'm a dying man. I'm going to have one last fling at life before I go away. I'm not going to die in no stinking hospital."

"You got a bad ticker, huh?"

He nodded.

I asks Jake, "How much dough you got?"

"Well," he says slowly, "I got enough to last me for

quite a time anyway." He reached into his pocket, and pulled out a ten spot.

"Here, take this," he says, "It would help you out."

Well, I didn't know what to do then.

Jake he says again, "It won't bite you."

"Thanks, Jake," I says, "I'll pay you back when I get work to do."

Jake he says nothing, then he lay down to rest again.

IV

When I awoke it was night, and a slight rain was beating down against the side of the car. Jake he was awake, and he moved around, I could hear him. Through a crack on the side of the car, I could see out into the night. We were going along at a rapid rate, and the trees and telephones rushed by like so much moving shadows. The country was plain and barren, and there was not a sight of anything near. The night was quite cold, and we sure were glad like hell that we were inside of a car, sheltered from the drizzy rain outside. The train turned a sharp curve, and almost threw me against the side of the wall. I heard Jake laugh. I gathered myself up, and peeped out of the crack again. Now I could see some trees far away. The rain had suddenly took on a new force, and now it was not raining, it was pouring down. And we could hear it thumping against the wooden tops.

"It sure is lucky that we are inside at a time like this." Jake says to me.

"Yeah," I answers, "otherwise we would be wet like hell."

"I wonder where we're heading for?" I says.

"Well," Jake says after a while. "Let's hope it's heading us straight toward something worthwhile. We got to settle down sometime, and it might just as well be right now."

"Yeah," I answers.

The rain was still falling outside. The wind blew in through the crack in the wall. It was quite cold now.

The train was crossing a bridge now, and I could see the dark water way below like a dull black mirror. Suddenly the train lurched forward, and it gave a sharp turn. I almost knocked my head against the wall.

"That hell of a conductor ought to be shot," I says.

Jake laughed.

"What the hell, can't you take it?"

Jake he lay down again and coughed furiously. His cough sounded like a terrible sick man. He spat into the corner, and coughed again.

"Are you cold?"

"No," Jake says.

"If you're cold, I'll let you have my coat," I says to Jake.

"No," Jake says again, "You better take it. I'm all right."

The train rumbled on, and soon the darkness came in, and the night wore on.

## V

It was the next morning that everything happened. Now when I think back of it all, it is like a hazy dream.

Jake woke up that morning, and the first thing he did was to say to me, "Listen, Kid, I lost a roll of my money. I want you to tell me the truth, did you take it?"

"No, Jake," I says.

He turned to the other two men, but Jake he says nothing.

There was a puzzled look on his face, worried and troubled.

Bill was acting kind of funny that day, too, and I kept my eyes on him. Once I looked him right into the eyes, then he turned away.

All afternoon Jake he didn't say nothing at all, and I could see that he was greatly worried. He didn't say anything about the money to Bill or Jack.

Bill was silent all day, and it was strange to me. He didn't talk, and he was quite nervous.

When he lay down to rest, I saw a roll of something sticking in his pocket.

I went up to Bill and I says, "You stole the old man's money."

His face flushed, red up to his ears.

"I wouldn't say that if I were you," he yells at me.

"What's that in your pocket?," I yells back at him.

Bill's face became livid with rage. He grapped hold of my neck, and says loudly, "That's none of your business."

For the first time Jack speaks out, "If you aren't careful I'll let you have one on the kisser."

Jake he lay down at the corner of the car, saying nothing.

"You stole Jake's money," I says again.

"If you looking for trouble, here goes," Bill says.

He held his fist together, and then he let go of one. Whew! It brought the stars right into my eyes. My head whirled like nobody business. Then before I knew it, he threw himself against me, and I can feel his hot breath on my face. I let go of myself, and with both my feet, I kicked him far away. He crashed against the wall. In that instance I managed to get up from the floor. My breath was coming in gasps. Bill he rushed at me again, hatred in his eyes, his face livid with rage. He headed straight toward me, his left elbow bent, ready to deliver his blow. I stood on my two feet, ready to do anything. Bill he swung that heavy left of his straight toward my eyes. If I was any slower, he would have landed me then and there. By instinct I ducked, and ducked just at the right moment. Bill he then lost his balance, and because he was heavy, he threw himself against the heavy wooden floor. At that moment, Jack sprang into action. He jumped behind my back, and the two of us rolled down on the floor. Quite accidentally he knocked his head against a heavy wood near the floor, and was he out! I'm telling you, he's out!

All this time Jake he watched us, doing nothing, unable to help.

By this time Bill was again ready for action. Because I was so disgusted with everything, I could feel a new surge of power that at that moment I was sure I could lick anybody, including Bill. Bill's hands were bleeding, the blood trickling down everywhere.

Bill he lost much of his power, what with a bloody hand and his face almost swollen up with pain. I landed him one right in his kisser, and boy, did I land that one. I'm telling you, that was sure a honey. Oh, boy!

All I remember was that he gave me one sock, I gave him another, and on and on like that. Pretty soon that mug Bill fell to the floor. He twisted around for awhile, then he was quiet. I took out the money from his pocket, and it was the money that Jake had lost.

I was panting for breath.

Bill and Jack were like two dead fish, lying there like that. It would be humorous if the situation was not so important.

"We must get away from these two."

"Sure, Jake," I says.

Sure enough right then and there the train came to a slow stop, and Jake and me, we got off quickly. Bill and Jack were slowly regaining consciousness.

"We sure lucky to get rid of those mugs," I says.

Jake he says nothing.

## VI

Night on the countryside. Everywhere it was dark like hell, and the air was hot and burning.

Jake he sat on the road, and he says, "You know, Kid," he says, "you ought to be working in a decent job, instead of stalling around the country like this. Don't you want to be somebody and settle down?"

I had started a small fire, and it crackled brightly.

"I'm getting used to this sort of wandering, moving around and not knowing what is going to happen. It's unsettled, but

it's a hell lot of fun anyway."

"I know," Jake says to me, "but you don't want to waste the whole part of your life being a bum, being nobody. There're thousands of homeless boys like you wandering around. Where they will end up, nobody knows."

"I don't know," I says, "I guess I'm sort of unsettled."

Jake he looked at me again, "If I were young and strong like you, I wouldn't be wasting my time bumming around the country. Pretty soon you find that it is too late to do anything. Then it is too late." He looked into the fire and continued, "I'm an old man. But you have so much ahead of you. You think it over, Kid," and you know that I'm right."

Well, I just sat there and listened to Jake, and I couldn't say anything at all. Kind of remind me too that I was out in the road, no place to go to.

I says to Jake, "Are you tired?"

"No," Jake says, and then he broke into loud coughing.

"Let's find some place where we can rest," I says to Jake.

He nodded. We walked on toward some big trees not far away.

Jake he lay down on the ground and says, "We might just as well rest here."

The big tree kind of sheltered us, and we were not so lonely in the night. I pulled my clothes around me tight. Jake he did the same. I pressed my back against his, and like that we fell asleep quickly.

## VII

The hot day had come again, and as I stared out

across the wild country the only thing that I saw was the sky, and lots of white sand. Jake he was ##b#e# gathering up his belongings and stretching his legs.

"Well, it looks like a mighty hot day," he says.

"I hope it don't get to hot," I says.

"We might just as well get going," he says, looking over the countryside, shading his eyes from the glaring sun. Looks as though we had a mighty long track ahead of us. There was nothing visible, not a sign of a human being. The land stretched far out into the distance.

We walked along, and my dogs sure hurt like the dickens. And my belly ached, darn it all. The sun was so hot, that I had to take off my jacket, and shirt. The sweat glistened on Jake's forehead.

Just as we were about to give everything up, we saw in the far distance a long row of freights. You can imagine, of course, our surprise. There was no use of speaking, and Jake and me, we both gathered speed, even though we were dead tired.

So Jake and me, we rushed forward scared like hell that maybe that darn car was going to beat it before we reach it. But we reached it all right.

Both of us were panting for breath.

"I'm going to take off my shoes, and give ~~this~~ these puppies of mine a rest," I says.

"Whew, this is a relief," Jake says. "We can take it easy now."

"I can rest my tired dogs now," I laughs.

We found an empty, entered it, and lay down. And it was sure cool and comfortable compared to the hot sun outside.

"Well, Kid, we're heading somehwer now," Jake he says to me.

"Somewhere is right, but where?" I asks.

Just then we heard the train slowly moving away, and then it gathered up speed, and away we were. Ain't we glad? You bet we were, after all the long walk and bumming around, a ride sure comes in handy, I'm telling ya. Jake and me, we just lay there in the dark corner, and didn't say anything. Everything was peaceful and quiet except the rumbling of the wheels on the car tracks.

Pretty soon I zays to Jake, "We're on our way."

Jake did not answer, and then I found out that he was asleep.

So I lay down too, and soon the rhythmic swaying of the freight made me feel drowsy.

## VIII

We passed scenes of pure beauty, and we were awed by the splendor of nature. Time and time again I could see the light in Jake's eyes.

He finally said after a long silence, "This sure is a mighty fine place to settle. I heard so much about this country, and this sure proves it to me."

"Yeah, It's a wonderful country," I says.

After an hour ride we stopped at a small station. Five minutes more the train moved on. We were approaching the city again. From where we were, we could see a big expanse of water in the distance. It was late afternoon now, and the hot day had submerged somewhat, and a cool breeze was evident throughout the late afternoon.

"The city's the place for us," Jake says.

"Yeah," I answers.

Pretty soon the train stopped in front of a large station near the waterfront.

Jake and me, we sneaked off very quickly.

"I think we better go somewhere where we can get cleaned up," I suggests.

"I guess we better," Jake laughs.

"The dicks may think we are something escaped from the zoo," I says.

Jake he laughed so hard that he almost choked himself into a coughing fit.

"Are you all right?" I says.

"You're O. K. Kid," Jake says after awhile.

All around the waterfront there were old broken shacks, old factories. The long rails stretched far into the distance. Far below, we could see the town.

Jake and me we walked along until we reached the outskirts of hhe city. There were lots of Japs and Chinamen living there.

I saw a bathhouse, and Jake and me, we entered.

The Jap woman came out.

"We want to clean up," I says.

"This way, please," she says, leading us into a narrow alley. We could smell hot water, hot clean water, and it sure made me feel fine thenqand there.

The Jap woman she cleaned two bathtubs with Dutch Cleanser.

"You take this one," she addresses Jake, "and you," she turned to me,c"take the fourth room."

The hot water was clean and invigorating. I jumped into

the tub and scfubbed myself hard. I looked into the mirror, and discovered that my hair were long, and thick black hair were growing around my lips. I bathed slowly, enjoying the warm comfort of the hot water. I could hear Jake bathing in the other room. I finished and came out.

I says to the jap man, "Give me a haircut and a shave."

"Wait a minute," he says to me.

Jake he came out pretty soon. He looked much refreshed and his face had a warm glow.

"Gee, it sure feels good to get a good hot bath," I says.

"Yeah," he says. "I guess I get a haircut too."

After awhile the Jap man he finished with the other man.

I got up on the chair, and immediately the Jap man, he clipped his scissors with quick snaps. My long hair began to fall down. A nd Jesus Christ! When I looked into the mirror, I was like a new man, ten years seemed to have fallen in my age.

It was Jake turn to get a haircut, and I picked up a newspaper and read it.

And Jake looked like a new man when he got his hair cut.

"Well, Jake," I says, "I guess we look like human beings now."

"I guess we do, Kid," he says.

"My belly could stand something," I says, "let's go and get some chow."

"Not a bad idea at all," Jake he says to me then.

We paid the Jap man what we owed, and we walked down the street.

There was a nice hamburger shop on the corner of the ###### street.

Jake and I we entered. Jake ##### ordered a hamburger, a bowl of soup, and some pie. I ordered the same.

The food sure tasted good in our empty bellies.

After we finished I says to Jake, "Where're we bunking tonight?"

Jake he says to the man who brought us food, "Where's a food place to rent a room?"

The man he says, "Right above here, there's a Jap hotel. You can get a good room there for a good price."

"Thanks," Jake says.

We went up to the Jap hotel. The Jap lady led us to two rooms, with a door in the wall, adjoining the other room.

"How much?" Jake says.

"Fifty cents a day," the Jap lady says.

"We want to rent it for a month," Jake says.

"Twenty-five dollars for two rooms," the Jap says.

Jake thought for awhile. "All right," he says.

"Can we afford it?" I says to Jake.

"We can," Jake says, and he dismissed the matter completely.

I had never slept in a bed for such a long time that the very sight of one made me sit down, just to feel its softness, its cleaness. I lay down in the bed, feeling comfortable and satisfied. Jake came in through the door in the wall.

"How you like it?" he demands.

"I like it fine," I says.

"I think I rest up a bit," Jake says.

"Me too," I answers.

Jake he went back to his room.

The softness of the bed sure feeled comfortable, believe me. Soon I saw pictures of freight cars, of Bill, of Jack. Already I could hear Bill snoring in the other room.

I wondered what is going to happen to us. The clock ticked on.

IX

The days and weeks went by like silent shadows. Days of worrying where we were going, and what was to happen to the both of us. The money was slowly oozing away. When we were down to our last ten dollars, we found it necessary to leave the Jap hotel.

"Well, Jake," I says one day, "I guess we better look someplace else."

"Yeah, Kid," he says to me.

We walked down the street, wondering, wandering, everywhere. Jake he was silent for quiet a long time.

We walked around near the waterfront.

"Jake," I says to him, "I really don't know how I can repay you for all that you have done to me."

"Don't think about it," he says to me.

We stood at the end of the city, looking far out into the great ocean far away.

Both of us were silent, then we turned our back and started

back toward the city.

We passed by an empty lot, near the outskirts of China-town. There was a big place there, huge and uninhabit, uninhabited except for two lonely huts. All around there were weeds, wild growths, and one or two broken automobiles.

A little brown dog was barking wildly at us.

Pretty soon a man came out, looking toward us. The dog continued to bark very loud.

He approached us, and he says, "You folks searching for something?"

I says to him, "No."

"My dog don't like strangers," he says.

The dog became quiet after the man silented him.

Jake he looked toward the old hut in the middle of the empty lot.

"That sure is a mighty fine house you got there," Jake says.

"Yeah, isn't it?" the man says, "I've been living here for almost two years now, just like this with my dog. You see that house over there?" he pointed to a house nearby. "That house only has been there five months. I helped Brown build it." Then he added, "Want to come over and see it? Brown lives there, and he's a nice man to know."

We followed Tall Man across the lot. We found out afterward that he was called Tall Man by everyone, and nobody called him by his real name. They called him Tall Man.

We came upon a very crudely built hut, but at the same time, the crudeness seemed to be that of the material, rather than the workmanship of the work. Tall man opened the door.

Tall Man introduced us to the man who was inside reading a newspaper. Soon we found ourselves talking to the two men about our life, and how we got to be what we were.

Then it was that Tall Man suggested to us, "Why don't the two of you stay here with us?"

"But we would be in your way," Jake says.

"I built the shack myself, and you two can do the same. There's plenty of old lumber around here, and you can use it. It don't cost anything, so you get something for nothing."

"But how can you get along like this?" I asks Tall Man.

"I've been living like this for over two years, and has no trouble at all getting along." Then he added, "Just suppose you two stay here and find out for yourself, what say?"

What was there for us to say. We were glad of the opportunity to find a place to rest and have something to eat. And that was how we finally landed among the two men.

That evening Jake and I we were sitting on the steps of the shack, looking at the sun setting far away. Both of us found it difficult to speak, thinking about something which we did not know what it was.

Jake had grown a little since he lived at that Jap hotel. But his face still had that ghostly pallor. Tall Man must have noticed it, for that evening he says to me when Jake was in bed, "That partner of yours, he's in a bad fix, ain't he?"

"Yeah," I says, "he's got a bad heart."

Tall Man he says nothing for awhile. Then he says, "You think he'll be all right here?"

"I guess so," I answers, "only he can't do any hard work."

Tall Man says to me, "I'm willing to help you built your shack. I got a lot of tools."

"You won't have any time," I says.

Tall Man laughed. "I hsve plenty of time."

"Do you work?" I asks.

"Oh, sometimes people bring in automobiles, and I fix it for them for a few dollars."

"You mean this is the way you make your money?"

"Sure."

"But you don't get work to do regularly, do you?"

"No."

"Then how could you live like this for so long?"

Tall Man pointed to a shack across the street.

"There's a Chinaman who lives there. He always bring over vegetables and food to me. He's a vegetable man, and whatever he can't sell, he brings over here."

"And what you use for water?"

"I go to the garage station around the corner."

For a moment I couldn't speak.

"You want to look around my shack?"

I nodded.

Gee, that shack sure was a shack. There's a toilet which Tall Man installed himself. There's a bed, tables, two chairs, and many wooden shelves of the wall. There were two window on the wall.

"This is a nice place," I says to Tall Man.

"You like it?" Tall Man says.

"Sure."

"Well, you can build yourself one just like this."

"This don't seems like a bad life at all," I says.

"You'll get used to it," Tall Man tells me.

Jake he was already asleep in Brown's room.

"You can bunk with me tonight," Jake says.

"Okay," I says, "I'm so tired, I can sleep like a log."

X

The days went by quickly, and I found out from Brown himself that he was going to go on like this, with this life indefinitely. It seemed that once he had a wife. And two children two. But you know, it all goes back to the same story. There was another man. Then divorce, and so on. And as Tall Man said to me one day, "Believe me, I'm not going to get hook up with no dame anymore!"

Brown was a recent inhabitant of the empty.lot. He drove into the lot one day with a green trailer. He lived there and soon was completely interested in this sort of life. Tall Man helped him build his shack. Brown sold his trailer for thirty dollars when he was badly in need of cash.

In the days that followed I found out that Both Brown and Tall Man were nice fellas. We were all in the same boat helping each other out. Sometimes Brown went around the town, and washed windows and floors for fifty cents a day. In this way he made a little money.

And that Chinaman who lived across the street. He brought us a little more fruits and vegetables, and sometimes some stale bread.

Tall Man helped me built the shack, and one week's time

it was finished. It was just a plain little shack. Anyway it was good enough for us, so that's that.

Jake he was growing thinner again. His cheek bones stood out prominently on his gaunt and thin face which was the color of pale yellow. He had a will to go on living despite conditions all around him.

"Well, Kid," he says to me one evening, "how do you like it here?"

"It's all right," I answers.

Jake was beginning to cough now. His face was shallow, and he did not seem to have anymore vitality in that weakened body of his at all.

"Jake, are you feeling all right?" I says to him.

"Sure,I'm all right," he says, "there's nothing wrong with me."

Jake he did not want to admit that he was sick.

"I'm feeling fine as a fiddle."

Then he got up, and went and lay down on his couch which he built himself.

I continued to sit outside on the steps. There wasn't anymore to do. The clouds up above began to float in thick masses, and soon the blue of the heaven gave way to a dull gray atmosphere. It looked as though it was going to rain soon. The storm clouds continued to gathered quickly, and very soon a light rain began to fall steadily downwards. We could hear the drip drip of the falling rain as it began to leak down the cracks on the roof. The water came falling down with measured tread.

The weather was turning cold, and the wind blew in with renewed strenghh, blowing the sand along with the gush of wind. The day turned dark, the heavy rain followed the slight shower. It was so cold inside the hut that I lit a fire in the old broken stove. The room became warm then.

Jake was asleep now.

Outside the rain continued to fall, and in the night when I woke up, I heard Jake coughing loudly and furiously in his corner. The rain swept on in the night.

The next day the rain was still falling steadily. It was about ten in the morning when I woke up, tired and cold. Jake he was suffering quite badly in his corner. Whether it was the gray day or whether it was the cold weather that threw a deadly pallor into Jake's face I cannot tell. Only he looked like a corpse that was still alive.

I went over to him. "Jake, maybe we better call someone to see if you are all right."

"It's all right," Jake says, "it's just a light cold."

I wished I could do something for Jake. I cannot stand the way that he was suffering. But he din't want to see anyone.

He remained in bed all that day, making no attempt to get up.

BallMan came in and inquired about Jake's condition.

"He's quite bad off," I says, glancing sideways to see if Jake was listening to me or not.

"Is he coughing much?" he says.

"Rather badly," I says.

"We ought to do something for him."

"But he don't want to see anyone," I says.

And all through the day Jake coughed and looked mighty bad. I could see that he was in pain, but he tried to hide it from us. But Tall Man and me, we could see plain as day.

And when the evening came he was worst. I went over to one of the corner drug store and brought home a box of cough drops, and some thing for Jake's cold. He slept all day and evening, and I was worried.

## XI

Morning came. The sun was shining, but the weather was cold. Jake was not in bed. I went outside and asked Tall Man, "Is Jake with you?"

He says, "No, I didn't see him this morning. I woke up early this morning, and if Jake came out, I could have seen him.

I became alarmed, knowing that something must have happened during the night when we were all asleep.

"Where could he have gone?" I asks.

Tall Man shook his head. Brown said that he did not know either.

I went back to the shack. There was a note on the table. I must have missed it when I came out in the morning.

It was written in poor handwriting.

"Don't look for me. I'm going somwhere. I won't last very long. Goodbye, Kid." That was all in the note.

Nothing else was in it. Somehow I could not believe that

Jake really was away.

I says to Tall Man, "I got to look for him, I just got to."

Tall Man says to me, "But you don't know where he went to. You can't find him just like that."

But I hurried away. I went down to the freight yards. There was nobody there. In a sort of daze I wandered around the town, hoping that somewhere, somehow I could come upon him.

At evening I returned back to the house, the house where Jake used to live in. I felt a choking feeling in my throat. I went back into the house.

Tall Man came in. "No sign?"

I shook my head.

"You mustn't worry too much," he says.

He went out.

The room now was quiet. I missed Jake's loud cough.

The next few days I inquired everywhere about Jake. There was no sign. I cannot believe that Jake has ended his own life. Perhaps he had wandered off somewhere to die. I was confident that somehow I would come across him somewhere.

## XII

Two weeks later, not being able to stand the silence anymore, I, too, took to the road again. Somewhere, someplace I would meet my friend Jake again, and perhaps together we might travel again, and always be together. It was without any sadness that I left the shack, and headed toward the open country.

Jonn Leyim (Jon Lee)
334 Fifth Street
Oakland, California

short story

# I Came Back to Tell You

Many weary days have passed, my brother, and the memory of you still lingers on, like a continuous dream of fantastic nightmares, endless, forever. Here you are, and I want you to listen to me. Do you still not know what you have done to me, making life a torture, a living hell, cruel and unjust, forever bitter? Before I cannot tell you, but now I come back, and you will have to listen to me.

Long before the day I died, you had tortured me, made life a living hell, and I suffered all your unjust jeers in silence, not because I wanted to stand them, but there was nothing that I can possibly do. You were stronger than I was, and I was weak and thin. All your loud laughter, your humiliation of me, all your superiority, I was afraid of ~~them~~ them all.

But this you will know, my brother, and I am telling you all this so that you will know what I had been through when I was alive and vital. During those years of slow ~~agonizing~~ agonizing death I knew what it was to suffer, to be laughed at, not being able to do what I wished to do. It was a living inferno of timeless and deathless death.

I came back to tell you all this, because when I was alive I cannot tell you. I was timidly afraid of you, of life, of everything on earth. Now that I am foerever and ever dead, I have courage, and I am laughing into your face, sneering at you, jeering at you just like the way you did when I was alive.

Now I am rotted in the dust of this humble earth, dead and finished, and what satisfaction have you gotten out of it?

I ask you now. You sit there, unable to say anything, unable to understand. Can't you hear me?

Oh, in those days so long ago I wanted so much to live, to breathe, to be strong like you and healthy like you, to be like any other normal boy. I wanted so desperately to be one of you, to play, to laugh, to live fully. But never had I that one chance. I was a corpse, not wholly dead, not wholly alive, bitter, discouraged, forever weak and sickly. I suffered in silence.

I don't want any of your sympathy or pity. Your heart is one made of stone, and you would not understand anyway. You have no feelings whatsoever. I suffered in your hands terribly, unjustly.

And although you are my brother, you never treated me like one.

I guess I was never happy when I was with Mama and Papa. Never had I a zest for living, and you made life terribly undurable for me. I wanted so much in those gloomy days to forget how helpless and ill I was. But now I am gone these many years. Well, my sufferings are ended, but yours have just begun. You sit there and stare. Well, my brother, I am laughing at you with the same bitter satisfaction, yes. You will always remember what you did to me, and how in the end you killed me.

When I was alive I cannot tell you all this, but now I am forever dead and finished, and I am saying it loudly and fully. You, you, my brother killed me.

I can still remember the days when I was with Mama, days of unending trouble, everlasting, days of pain and bitter discourage-

ment. I do not think I can ever forget those days. I can still see you with you big and fat face, and I am not proud to call you my brother.

The days are gone, the months and years are like phantoms of the past, but you are like a haunting dream, forever darkening and omi nous.

I never let Mama know what you did to me, or how much I suffered in your hands. Mam loved all of us, even you.

Now that I think back to that time of my earthly life, I do not know how I ever stood it all. Three years, years of real agony, it was to me. I am glad for Mama than I am dead. She no longer have to see my half-dead body in the white bed. Papa does not have to call in anymore doctors, and most of all you cannot make fun of me any longer. I am forever the dust of dust, and rotted and finished, and no matter what you do, or what you say, I know you cannot hurt me any longer.

I came back to tell you all this, my brother, and you will know what unjustice I suffered in your hands. You sit there and say nothing? You are ashamed?

I surely did miss Mama. Mama must have been through a lot of trouble and despair, and with Papa out of work, and you not wanting to help, she must have suffered a lot.

You were the only one who could have helped Mama. But you spent all your time in the poolrooms, going around with bad companions, and coming home, making fun of me, laughing that bitter laugh of yours.

I was lost and forgotten by everyone except Mama. I had not ~~freinds~~ friends, no one who would talk to me, or was interested

to be my companion. I was almost an invalid, sick, tired, utterly hopeless.

How much I suffered in those days no one would ever know. Day in and daymout, that hopeless feeling, that strange and bewildering knowledge of being weak, unable to rise above myself, gripped me and ~~frightened~~ frightened me. In those lonely days, I was utterly lost, lost in my sadness and weeping of inevitable death. I never told Mama what I went through. Somehow I cannot tell anyone. I don't want any sympathy or pity from anyone.

But those nights were the worse. I would wake up in the middle of the deep night, feeling lost and forever strange in the darkness of the smallness of the room, the walls, ##### moving, and strange figures danced in front of my eyes, fantastic, then and now, feeling lost and strange, utterly without any knowledge as to what was going on, feeling dead and finished. I didn't care then what was to happen to me. I was down, depressed completely, sad utterly.

Now I am dead, and the memory of your unjust ways lingers on and on.

I came back to tell you all this, my brother, with the hope that perhaps all these years you might have changed over. Perhaps you have never regretted what you did to me.

Now when I think back to the days when I was with you, and Mama was happy, and you still at school. I am glad now that I am dead, yes dead and almost forgotten by you anyway.

I no longer have to listen to your sneers and laaghing.

I no longer have to face you ~~face to face~~ anymore.

Years have changed, and have you changed? Why all this bitterness anyway.

You were young then, carefree and gay, without any care of trouble. You had fun and joy. I had not.

But absent makes the heart grow fonder, and much as I hate you, and much as I remember the wrongs you did me, yet I cannot bring myself to hate you completely. You are my brother, and I cannot forget that.

I came back to tell you all this, because I wanted to know you are helping Mama and Papa. I don't want to see you as you were. I want you to be my brother.

I am forever finished and through, and what happens to me does not matter much. You are alive, and I don't want to see you going through life the way you had been doing.

Perhaps I was unjust to say that you caused my death, and that you hastened my death. I hated you whenever I thought of you.

But I want to forget, want to eradicate all this bitterness and hatred. That is the reason why I came back to tell you all this.

I guess I have forgiven you, and I want to be your brother again.

Jon Lee
Oakland

story

# Mama Soohoo Goes to Town

Velly long time now Mama Soohoo no go to Melican town buy things because always daughter Mei Jun go for her and buy things back to house for Mama and Papa and little brother, Wei Bung. Mei Jun tell Mama many times no go because Mama has small feet and when people see Mama on street, people laugh velly loud like animals in wild. Mama Soohoo hurt by Mei Jun's remark for Mama no think that daughter Mei Jun would say things like that to own Mama.

This morning white Melican boy delivered paper to house. Mama Soohoo was in kitchen busy make rice for Papa to eat. Newspaper he made loud noise on door, and Mama got there and picked up paper, but she no can read paper. She showed paper to Papa Soohoo, but Papa no can read white men's writing also. Mama Soohoo waited until daughter Mei Jun got up and showed paper to Mei Jun.

Mei Jun tell Mama that afternoon heap big sale go on in Whitthorne and Swan. Store open until nine o'clock at night and plenty cheap sheets for beds, cheap things to wear too. Mama Soohoo's eyes they go bright with light and she say to daughter Mei Jun, I go down town afternoon and buy things. Papa Soohoo hear what Mama say and he put down paper he is reading. He tell Mama that she no go to white men town long time now. She no can find way there.

Mama say, I find way all right. Mama no go to town for

over ten years but she find way all right.

Mei Jung good daughter she say to Mama, Mama, you wait till I come home from school and night time you and I could go to town.

Mama Soohoo say to daughter Mei Jun, I go town myself. I find way alone.

Mei Jun is scared of Mama get lost in big crowd. She afraid that Mama no walk fast enough for very fast cars because Mama Soohoo got small feet.

Cars come by fast, Mei Jung say to Mama, and cars go away fast.

Mama Soohoo say to daughter Mei Jun, You think Mama no sarbee nothing. Mama has small feet, but Mama can walk on small feet.

Mei Jun afraid that maybe white men and women laugh at Mama Soohoo's funny clothes and pants. Maybe white men laugh at Mama's small feet too.

Mei Jun say to Mama again, You stay home, Mama, and I go buy for you all right?

Mama Soohoo say to Mei Jun, I no go to Melican town long time. I take little Wei Bung to see Santa Clausee on window playing.

Wei Bung hear Mama say Santa Clausee, and he laugh and say, Me go, Mama, me go, Mama.

Many white men all on street, daughter Mei Jun say to Mama Soohoo. Mama maybe could not pass by. Mama maybe get lost and go up city hall for police take home. And maybe Mama no go home no more.

Mama Soohoo say, I no fraid get lost. I be all right.

Papa Soohoo ~~trid~~ try to stop Mama Soohoo from going up town but Mama want to go. Mei Jun no want Mama go up town, but there is nothing that daughter Mei Jun could do.

Mama Soohoo put on clean Chinese dress. She put shining oil on black hair and make shine like sun in sky. Then she put big black cloth around hair like hat. She put on small Chinese slippers about four inch long buy from San Francisco no long time ago.

Mei Jun go school already. Papa go to work. Mama Soohoo put new clothes on little Wei Bung. Then she go in room where she sleep and get two five dollars paper money and put it way down in pocket near underwear. She take little Wei Bung by small hand and come slow down stair. Then she lock door tight because she no want any bad men go in house steal too much things.

Next door neighbor see Mama Soohoo and little Wei Bung. Neighbor yell down from high window, Where you going?

Mama say, I go Sewan buy cheap things.

Neighbor say, How you find way to town? You no go ten years.

I find way all right, Mama Soohoo say to neighbor.

She go up street holding little Wei Bung by small hand, and many people turn head look at Mama Soohoo because people no frequently see Mama Soohoo on street at all. Mama Soohoo's feet like two long chopsticks when she walk. Upper part body large and fat, and feet very small. She look velly funny to people. She don't know that many people look at her.

Mama Soohoo no scare of streets where no cars run by. She scare of street where too much cars run by so fast. She stand in street and body want to go across, but feet stop her like cold frozen in ice. Pretty soon she see men go across and she follow fast she could. She reach other side street and hear heart beat on chest like Chinese ~~####~~ drums on New Year. Mama Soohoo want go back home now, but she scare of go across street one more time.

So she go on to Melican time. On, on, she go, but no town come into eyes to see. Mama Soohoo get scared now because town no near her. She want ask men on street where town is but all white men no speak Chinese. But Mama Soohoo has good strong eyes and far away she see many people walking. She go that way. She never know that town has so much people like one hundred Chinese villages. People walk velly fast and Mama Soohoo surprised that they walk like go to see fire. Velly funny thing to Mama Soohoo watch red, yellow, green lights ~~ringing~~ ringing on long black poles. She see people stop and no get across to other side until ringing bell tell them that it is all right. She see policeman pull back man who go across street when green light no say so yet. Mama Soohoo follow crowd of people go across street. She walk slow and when she get to middle of street people in back of her suddenly in front of her. People look at Mama Soohoo with funny eyes. She smile and show yellow ~~teeth~~ teeth to white men and women. Lotsum people turn head round to look at Mama Soohoo.

Mama Soohoo put hands in pocket many times to see if bills still there. Bills still there and Mama Soohoo happy.

She want buy many sheets to put on bed to sleep. She like Melican town velly much. Lotsum people move everyplace. Mama Soohoo wonder if she can find way home again.

Little Wei Bung say to Mama, Mama, I no see Santa Clausee, I want see Santa Clausee. Little Wei Bung begin to cry.

Pretty soon we see Santa Clausee, Mama say to little honorable offspring.

Mama go to Whitthorne's and Swan, and see in window on corner little big animals moving like cartoons of rat called Mickey in pictures moving. Little Wei Bung like to stay long time at window to watch animals, but Mama want to go buy sheets very cheap. She go in door and big fat white man bump into Mama. White man take off hat and say, Pardon me, I'm so sorry.

Mama smile back and show yellow teeth because white man good manners. Mama Soohoo go into store but she no understand what to do. Lotsum people gather around place and she cannot see things at all. Mama Soohoo no speak the English. Pretty soon she see Chinese boy. She ask Chinese boy where sell sheets. Boy tell Mama Soohoo that sheets is way down in basement in the bottom.

Mama Soohoo walk careful down stairs because small feet cannot go fast like big feet of Melican men. She see white sheets on table. She go over and pick up one. White woman see Mama Soohoo and say, May I help you? Mama Soohoo look at white woman and see that she got white hand and face heavily painted with lotsum ~~rouge~~ rouge and powder like doll on

s

shelves. Mama Soohoo don't know what to say to white woman. White woman say again, May I help you? Mama Soohoo look at woman and no say nothing. She pick up sheet and point to it. White woman say, This costs ninety-nine cents. Mama Soohoo look with bewilderment in face, because she no understand what say.

Then white woman hold up one big silver dollar and point to sheet. Mama Soohoo understand. She take out one five dollar bill and give to woman. Woman wrap sheet up and give Mama Soohoo change. She count in Chinese way and know she got right money. She thank white woman with a bow and then she go up stairs slow.

Many white men look at Mama Soohoo's small feet. She no care. She go to nother section buy heavy wool union wear for Papa. Then she buy small handkerchief for Mei Jung to blow nose on.

Mama Soohoo find that she has five dollars left when everything is buy already. She make ready go home, but she see fur coat she like. She ask Chinese boy who pass by how much fur coat cost. He tell Mama that fur coat cost only four dollars and ninety-five cents. Mama Soohoo want buy coat very much. Coat has not real fur all around neck heap good and warm. Mama put coat on and see people smile. She no know people smile because she look funny in Melican coat and she has such small feet like lily. She look at self in tall mirror. Coat fit good and she want buy it to make Papa eyes open wide like Cantor Eddie in movies.

White woman wrap up coat for Mama Soohoo, and she go

out of building.

Little Wei Bung keep crying. I want to see Santa Clausee.

Mama Soohoo heap mad because little honorable offspring cry too much.

Mama Soohoo say to Wei Bung, You cry too much. Santa Clausee no bring you any toys to play on your hang up stocking. You no cry, Santa Clausee bring you lotsum toys.

Little Wei Bung keep quiet. Mama happy then.

On street Mama Soohoo don't know which way go home. Then she remember tall building across street. She remember lotsum buildings on street. She still scare of cars that go back and forth very fast.

Mama Soohoo could not walk good. Fur coat heavy on hand. White men still look at Mama's small feet. Pretty soon Mama reach street where own house is. Next door neighbor shout down from window way upnhigh near sky.

What you buy, Mrs. Soohoo?

Mama Soohoo say, I buy many things for Papa and Mei Jun. I buy new coat for myself.

Neighbor say, How much cost new coat?

Not five dollars.

Good price, neighbor say from window.

Mama Soohoo get out key and open window and door. Mei Jun is back from school sweeping floor. When she see Mama she say out loud, Papa, Mama is back from town with many things. She no get lost.

Papa no say nothing and he read paper with glasses on nose.

Mama come upstairs and put packages on table. She say to Papa, White people all look at me today.

Papa say nothing. Mei Jung say to Mama. How you find way, Mama?

Mama say in proud voice, I find town myself. I see many people on street and I go there. I buy new handkerchiefs for you, Mei Jun.

Mei Jung's eyes open wide and she say, Let me see, Mama.

Mama take off packages and show Mei Jung handkerchiefs. Mei Jung very glad to have handkerchiefs. Mama then show union shirt to Papa.

Look, Papa, she say, I buy this for only fifty cents.

Papa put down paper and say to Mama, Good for cold winter. Then he read paper again.

Then Mama Soohoo go to big box and from it big black coat come out. Mei Jun say loud, Look, Papa, Mama got new coat. Papa almost no believe ears at all. He look and see black coat coming out of box.

Papa ask Mama, How much cost? Mama say only five dollars. Papa let out big breath because he think of fifty dollars a month he make. He go back read paper again. Mei Jun put handkerchiefs in pocket. Wei Bung say to Mei Jun, Mama say Santa Clausee bring me much toys. Mei Jun too happy with handkerchiefs to listen to little Wei Bung.

Mama put on coat and look in mirror. She look good she think. Then she take out coat and put away careful in closet.

Next door neighbors talk about Mama Soohoo for many days. Neighbors say to each other that Mama Soohoo go up town by herself and no get lost. Everybody say Mama Soohoo heap smart woman all right, yes?

Mama Soohoo velly proud people say she smart. She put on new black coat many times and when neighbors see it, neighbors say again that Mama Soohoo velly smart woman.

Jon Lee
Oakland, Calif.

story

# The Big Boss

The Big Boss sat on the chair, his heavy body moving restlessly. A big black cigar hung in the corner of his mouth, unlighted. He chewed on it nervously. Then he looked up at Rico and Dobie.

I might need you two boys tonight, he said.

Tonight, what for? Rico asked.

Tony either pay tonight or else I'll fill his belly so full of lead he'll die of indigestion.

Give him the works, eh?

The Big Boss nodded.

We better be careful, Boss, Dobie put in, they're still looking for the guys that bumped off Nick Carlson. We better wait until that blows over before doing anything else. We don't want the dicks to pin anything on us now.

Tony'll pay tonight or else he's going to the cleaners. You two take him for ride and see that he don't return.

I get you, Boss, Rico said.

And no slips up this time. What do you two think I pay you for? Doing nothing?

Dobie said, It 's too close to the Carlson killing. We could wait. Tony'll pay up soon.

The Boss glared at Dobie.

What's the matter with you, getting yellow? You two mugs stay around tonight, and remember, no monkey business. I'm still Boss around here, and everything I

say goes, get that under your thick skull and remember it.

Dobie's mouth twitched. He remained silent.

All right, get going, you two, the Boss said, but stick around.

Dobie and Rico came out of the room.

Someday I'm going to let that palooka have a piece of my mind. Who does he think he is anyway, speaking to us like a couple of dogs.

He's nobody except our meal tickets, that's who he is.

The Boss, Dobie muttered.

The two men walked into the gambling casino. A great crowd gathered around the roulette tables and dices.

I wish I could get my hands on those rocks that Mrs. Kent is wearing, Dobie put in.

Whew! Rico whispered, they must be worth millions.

Maybe someday when I'm on the top, then watch me go, Dobie said.

You better watch out for yourself or you'll never reach the top. The Boss ain't approving of many things you've been doing lately.

The corners of Dobie's mouth dropped.

Well, what about it? he said.

If I were you I'll be careful of myself in front of him. Or you'll get into hell of a lot of trouble.

Dobie said nothing. He knew that Rico was afraid of the Boss.

The two men approached the roulette table.

Dolly was there as usual.

Hy'a there, Big Boy, why the mask?

Dobie broke into a smile. Hello, Dolly, you sure look like the works tonight. What happened?

This roulette table bought mama a new dress, she laughed.

How's your luck tonight? Rico said.

Nix so far, she said.

The Boss at it again, Dobie said.

Who's it this time?

Tony.

Tony!

Why, what's the matter Dolly?

Oh, nothing, really nothing. She trembled. After awhile she controlled herself.

I got a hunch I'm going to win tonight, she said.

I hope you're not wrong, Rico said.

Lemme see, what number shall I play?

A negro went by. Dolly stopped him.

Tell me, Coffee, how many children you got?

Six, Miss Dolly, yes sir.

All right, Coffee, six it shall be.

I hope you win, Miss Dolly.

If I do, I give you a cut.

Oh, thank you, Miss Dolly.

You're really going to play six, Dobie asked.

Why not?

Oh, nothing, only one number is hardly enough for a winning streak.

If it's the right number, it's enough.

Dolly took a handful of chips and placed it on six.

You just watch, she said, with a gleam in her eyes.

The wheel spun around and then with a click the rolling dice settled on the number six groove.

Number six wins.

There, I told you so.

Well, so it did, Dobie said.

Well, congraluations, Rico said, coming up from the other side of the room. I fancy you just won.

I did.

Good for you.

Dolly laughed.

She's playing six all the way through, Dobie said.

Say, Rico put in, that's the number that won last week.

Did it really? Dolly demanded.

Yes.

I'm going to keep on with it, Dolly said.

She won again and again.

Don't you think you better quit now? Rico said after awhile.

Listen, Big Boy, I'm just started, what do you mean, quit.

You might lost it back again.

I won't.

Dobie said suddenly, Look, Tony's here.

Dolly stiffened. She looked toward the door.

Tony caught her eyes. He walked toward her.

Well, well, Dolly, he said, you must think I'm having the measles the way you been keeping your distance the last

day or two.

Only a day or two, and he starts yelling, Rico said.

Dobie remained silent.

Tony said, How about a date tonight, Dolly? How about going to a night ~~vlub~~ club with me?

I love to.

Then it's a date.

You'll remember.

I'll remember.

Dolly continued to play the roulette wheel for a few more moments.

I think I'll quit now, she said, Not a bad evening, ~~huhh?~~ hah?

Rico said, I'm glad you've quit. I'm so afraid that you might lose all you won.

Ah, but I won, she laughed.

You sure did.

I must find Coffee, she said. Be a good boy, Rico, and find Coffee for me.

My dear lady, Rico said with a bow, said party is over there. He pointed to him.

Coffee was near the doorway hanging up coats and wraps.

Dolly walked toward him.

There, Coffee, you take the whole works and blow it.

Oh, thank you, Miss Dolly, thank you so much.

It's all right, Coffee. Your lucky number did it. Buy yourselves a couple of Roll Royces and call it a present from your trulys

I know a better way of spending it, yes sir.

Dolly walked back to where Rico was standing.

How's the Boss tonight? she said in a worried voice.

He's in an awful bad mood.

You mean because of Tony.

Yes.

What's he going to do?

Why, he's-I-I ~~mene~~ mean I don't know.

Rico, tell me, I know by the way you're acting that somethkng's going to happen.

But Dolly, I really don't know. I can't.

Dolly said quickly, How much does Tony owe him ?

About two grand, maybe three.

Two G's, that's impossible.

But it's true.

I got to see the Boss, Dolly said. She walked away.

Rico caught up with her.

Not now, not in his mood now.

I'm going to see him, she said calmly.

Dolly walked away. She opened the door of the office and went inside.

The Big Boss was seated at his ~~deesk~~ desk, deeply looking over the profits of the month. He was smoking a great big black cigar, chewing it to pieces.

That sonavabitch, why don't he make figures so that a person could read them without having to look through a microscope to see what he's trying to write, he mumbled.

Dolly came close to the desk. The Boss looked up.

Oh, it's you.

Dolly said, Mike, what're you going to do with Tony?

Tony? Why, nothing.

You're going to finish him like ### Nick Carlson.

The Boss face became livid.

What put that idea into your head?

Tony owes you two grand, and if he don't pay tonight, you're-

Who's the dirty sonovabitch that's been squealing to you, the Boss interrupted.

Dolly said nothing.

The Big Boss looked at Dolly.

You're going for Tony in a big way.

Don't be silly.

Then why are you so interested in him?

I'm not.

The Big Boss got up from his seat. He came close to Dolly.

Listen you, you haven't been two-timing me, have you?

Oh Mike, you're hurting me.

Tell me!

You're hurting me!

Answer me!

Dolly drew away quickly.

Suddenly the Boss controlled himself.

Dolly, I'm sorry, I didn't know what I was doing.

Dolly was panting for breath.

Then she said, This is the end, and she turned quickly away and went out of the door.

The Big Boss mumbled, I'll fix him. He'd fix him all right.

He called Rico and Dobie.

Dobie said to Rico, whenever the Boss wants anything he calls for us. We do all the dirty work for him, and he sits behind his mahogony desk and don't do nothing.

He pays us plenty of dough for it, don't he? And he gives us a cut of the dirty work we do, don't he?

Cut my eyes. If you call a dirty small percentage a cut, go ahead.

We better go now, Rico said, the Boss is waiting for us.

Dobie scowled.

Rico opened the door.

The Boss said, Listen you two, I'm going to fix that guy Tony tonight.

He's outside, Dobie said quickly.

The Boss smiled bitterly.

Rico, tell him I want to see him.

Yes, Boss.

Rico returned with Tony after a little while.

Well, what did you want me for? Tony asked.

You know what I want you for, you know perfectly well.

You mean the money, why, I'll have that down here in a few days.

The Boss said, I get it tonight or.."

But I can't, not tonight. If you give me a few days.

I've been patient long enough.

But tonight. I can hardly do anything.

I've been easy with you long enough. I'm not going to waste any more words.

If you only let me have a few more days. I'm sure I can get it.

The Boss looked at Tony.

I'll give you till noon tomorrow. There will be no more ifs after that time.

All right, all right, I'll try to, Tony said fearfully, going out of the room.

The Boss said, All right you two. Follow him, and don't let him out of your sight. The moment he tries any monkey business, you lug him right back here.

Okay, Boss, Rico said.

Dobie said nothing. There was a sneer on his face.

He came out of the room and said, The Boss he is, and he don't know that Tony's pulling a fast one on him. He's making a play for Dolly, and he don't know nothing about it.

Tony's just a friend of Dolly, Rico said.

If you can call sleeping with someone else's girl friends, then he's a friend.

Just because there had been a few kisses between them do not mean that they're lovers.

Kisses! They've gone much farther than that.

Well, anyway, we better follow Tony, the Boss told us to.

Rico and Dobie went outside and got into a car, following a taxi which Dolly and Tony had just taken.

The dancing figures moved in rhythmic grace across the

floor of the Paradise cafe. The music was loud and jazzy.

Dolly and Tony were dancing. When the music stopped, they went back to the table.

I was so afraid for you, Tony. The Boss was going to get you tonight.

The Boss isn't as tough as he wants people to believe.

How're you going to raise the money?

I got five hundred.

What about the rest?

I really don't know.

Tony, I could lend it to you.

You?

Why, yes.

That's really swell of you. But I really hate to do it.

Just call it a loan, and you can pay it back to me later.

I really don't know how to thank you, Dolly.

Come on, Dolly said, let's get out of here.

See, Dobie said, I told you they would come here. I know now where they're going now, straight for Dolly's apartment.

Rico sat in the car, staring out across the street at the Paradise Cafe where two figures had just emerged.

Dolly and Tony drove away in a taxi. Immediately Dobie started the car and followed. The taxi stopped in front of a high class hotel. Tony and Dolly got off.

There, I told you so, Dobie said. Now you see for yourself that Tony's playing the Boss for a sucker.

Rico did not answer. He started the car and drove back to the gambling shop.

What are we going to tell the Boss, Rico said.

We'll tell him all we've seen.

You mean about Dolly too.

Yeah, everything.

But we couldn't.

Why not?

Because Dolly is..well, she's the Boss' girl and if ### he knows about it-

He's going to know about it, believe me!

You can't do that. The Boss would kill them both.

A queer smile flickered across Dobie's face.

Dobie, you mean..you...why you wouldn't do a thing like that.

Dobie said nothing.

Well, what did you find out? the Boss said.

Rico stood there, unable to speak.

What's the matter with you mugs, can't you speak?

Tony's at Dolly's apartment now, Dobie said calmly.

The Boss got up quickly. You're telling me the truth?

Yes, Dobie said, and not only that, she had dinner with Tony tonight at the Paradise Cafe. And Tony's been going to her apartment every other night. She's been two timing you right under your nose. You give her a lot of dough and what does she do with it, she spent it on another man.

The face of the Boss became a livid black.

You sonovabitch, he yelled out and started toward Dobie. He swung his hand out and landed one right on Dobie's jaw. Dobie fell and knocked his head against the wall. He jumped up quickly. He swung a heavy left which caught the Boss fully and he fell toward the floor knocking down a small table. His nose was bleeding badly.

Then suddenly the Boss drew out a gun. Rico caught him in time. You can't. You'll hang for it. The spectators from outside the gambling room were now crowding the room. The Boss controlled himself and put the gun in his pocket.

He went outside.

I'll fix him, that darn sonovabitch, Dobie muttered.

He picked up the phone.

Hello, operator, give me police station. Hello, police headquarters I...

Gee, darling, you look lovely tonight.

Dolly smiled. You like my dress?

I like the person in it better. Tony got up and held Dolly close. He pressed his lips closely to hers. Then he released her and pressed harder again. Dolly relaxed in Tony's arms. When he finally released her, Dolly said, I get you a drink. Tony sat down on the couch and took his coat off. Tony brought the drink over. She sat down beside him.

Tony picked up the glass. Well, here's looking at you, he said. He drained the glass.

Down the hatch, Dolly said, and she emptied her glass.

She filled the glasses up again. They emptied that quickly.

Whew! It's getting warm in here. Tony got up and opened a window.

Dolly was feeling a little woolzy now.

I guess I get into something more comfortable, she said.

She went into the bedroom without closing the door.

Her shadow was reflected on the door. Tony saw her slim lovely silhouette. Suddenly he had a desire for her.

Dolly, he said.

Yes, Tony.

She looked up and there was Tony at the door. Tony saw her bare flesh pink and smooth.

Dolly, he said, coming close. He held her close. Sweet, he murmured into her ears.

Oh, darling, she said.

Sweet.

Darling. He held her close and felt her warm body against him.

The Boss slowly made his way to Dolly's apartment. He felt in his pocket. The key was there. He stood outside the door listening. It was quiet. In fact, it was too quiet for him. He slid the key into the lock and slowly turned the knob. The door opened softly.

Tony's hat was on the table and his coat was on the couch.

Soft tones came from the bedroom. The Boss went toward the door. He peered in. His face was immobile, but there was a twitch near his mouth. He took out the gun. He pointed it toward the bed and quickly emptied it.

The echo of the gun died away. The Boss rushed out of the room. Then suddenly...

A great crowd gathered at the entrance of the hotel. Voices mingled everywhere.

The poor man, a lady was speaking, he fell down and broke his neck.

How did it happen?

I really don't know. I was in my room when suddenly I heard some shots. I came out and there was a man near the end of the hallway. He was trying to rush down the stairs. I think some policemen were coming up those stairs. I really don't know whether he fell down and threw himself down. It was ghastly.

The policemen were carrying the dead body out and putting it in an ambulance.

Rico and Dobie were watching with the crowd.

The lucky stiff, Dobie said, he should be hanging at the end of the rope.

I wonder how the police know about it, Rico said.

You don't have to guess at that, Dobie said calmly.

You mean, you..

I told the Boss I get even with him. Rico gasped.

I'm the new Boss now.

I guess you are, Rico answered.

Jon Lee
Oakland

story

# The Green Trailer

She drove into the empty lot one day, she and her husband, and she has never left it. Let's see, that was two years ago, two long years it seemed, and her green trailer has now become a regular landmark. Before, it was all wild space, just an empty lot with no one on it. There was one building on the corner, unoccupied, and all around it on three side were just weeds and wild plants.

However, four years ago, a lonely man started a little hut, a small shack which he built entirely by himself, and often we watched him, going across the street. He rarely noticed us, so absorbed was he in his work, and once we asked him out of curiosity, "Are you going to live here?"

He grunted a word which sounded like yes. He had a dog which growled at us whenever we got close to his master, and we always avoided the dog as much as possible. However, we were fascinated watching the man build his home. First a skeleton-like structure loomed up, then little by little, we saw the walls, the roofs nailed down, the beams, and before we knew it, the house was built.

As time went by, we noticed that the man across the street was a little more talkative, and once he even said hello to us, and when we came back we said to mother, "I wonder what happened to the man."

The years went by, and once when it was raining very hard, when we were sitting around the warm fire, we wondered

how the man across the street was feeling. we wondered too what he used for money, and whether he took a bath or not, and if he did, where did he take it.

One day we went across the street, and the man invited us in too see his shack. It wasn't very clean, but considering everything, it was a sort of luxury to him.

Many people drove in on trailers now and then, and once there was a man who drove his white trailer in. The outside of the trailer was painted with messages and pictures of the Holy Father. He was a thin pale man, and often when ~~he~~ we talked to him, he said, "Believe in Him, and you shall be saved." And he talked to us about sins and evils of men.

On Sundays he took out his organ and played music, and the music would come across the street, and we could even hear it in the house. However, he did not stay long, and soon he was away, and only the man in the hut was left.

One day a green trailer drove in, but none of us saw it. It must have driven in at night when he were all asleep. For when morning dawned, there it was, nice, clean, and very conspicuous in the empty lot.

We saw a woman and man come out of it, and they immediately struck up a friendship with the man in the shack. Day by day, we could see that the man and wife intended to stay indefintely.

The husband built a clothes line for the wife. The wife cleared the ground, and planted flowers and plants. When spring came, they bloomed wonderfully and magnificently.

They did not seemed to have any care in the world. We suspected that they must have some money, for we don't under-

stand how the husband could bring back package after package of food if he didn't have any money.

However, this woman always brought a pail to our house for water. She came twice a day, and mother would fill her bucket up with water. The woman was very kind, and all of us liked her immediately.

She did not wish to trouble us too much, and when a gasoline station opened down the street, she went there to get water. Everyday we saw her carrying the pail back and forth.

Once for many days we did not see her, and all of us became worried. So many of us children went across the street to the green trailer and knocked on the door. We heard a feeble voice saying, "Come in." We went inside and there the woman was, sick and pale. Her face lit up when she saw us.

The inside of the trailer was small, but spacious. There were two beds near the wall, and in the back, a small kitchen. Even though the room was small, it seemed spacious because everything was arranged just right. We wished to ask the woman many questions, but remembering to be polite, we just talked about ordinary things.

I remembered one time when it rained terribly hard. The woman came to our house and asked if we could spare any old tin.

"My roof is leaking badly," she said, "and I must have it mended." Fortunately, we have some old tin on the roof of our house, and we gave it to her. She took it across the street,

and we all crowded against the window, watching her husband nailing the tin on the roof while the wet rain beat around him.

The husband fell sick one day, and an ambulance came and took him away. He was carried away in a stretcher, and for many months he lay between life and death in the county hospital.

Often we went across the street and inquired if he was all right. The wife was worried, but she tried to remain cheerful and gay, but we knew that deep in her heart she was sad and unhappy. When the husband got well, all of us breathed a sigh of relief, for all of us were fond of the man too. He was kind, and once many times he even gave pennies and nickels to my little small sister.

Well, the trailer is still standing there in the empty lot, and the wife and man are still living there. Two years now it has been. How long are they going to stay there? No one knows. Even they do not know.

Meanwhile, we shall see the woman carrying her buckets to the gasoline station to get water.

There, across the street from our house, is a little world where people live and dwell, and while all the time right close to them, life rushes by, and the people in that world are unconscious of anything else except they must have food in their bodies, and water in their throat.

And so everyday we wonder when the green trailer is ever going away again, if ever.

Short Story An Open Letter to Santa Claus Jon Lee

Dear Santa:

I don't desire very much this year, Santa, but please, can we love something good to eat like bread, can foods, or maybe a little candy? You know, I am sure, our family has so little to eat, ever since my father lost his job in the SERA, and we don't get those can foods any more. Last Saturday we did not have any food in the house, and my mother, she cried then.

You remember last year, don't you Santa, of the letter I wrote you. Well, I asked for one little doll. But I guess you must have forgotten about me, for you didn't visit my house. But this year we moved, and I am now living at 657 Visalia Street. You can't miss my house this year for it is the little house on the corner with the broken chimney. I hope you don't mind coming down that chimney, because my father tried to fix it, but he hasn't the money right now.

All I want is something good to eat on Christmas, Santa, and that's not asking too much, is it? I want enough for my father, my mother, my brother George, and my sister Susan, and myself.

I remember Christmas of last year. I went to bed praying, hoping that Santa Claus would come. I wanted that Shirley Temple doll so much. I like to have those Shirley Temple dresses too. But only the doll alone would be enough for me.

But when I woke up in the morning I found out that my stocking was empty, only there ~~was~~ were two bars of chocolate candy in it, just like the kind I can buy at Kress for five cents. I looked for the dolls and dresses, but I can't find

them. I remember I cried, and mother said to me, "Darling, don't cry, Santa is very busy, and he forgets. He will bring them to you next year." I went back to my room, and I hated you, Santa.

Now I know I am wrong. I shouldn't have hated you. But you will remember me this year, won't you? I won't even ask for dolls or dresses, I just want something good to eat. Anything would do, Santa.

Well, anyway last year we did have some Christmas wreaths all around the house and in the windows. And I went down to Kress and bought some candles, and I lit them. They were very pretty, and sometimes I would dark the light in the house and admire the brightness of the candles. I went to bed on Christmas' eve last year, and I dreamt I went riding over the snow with you. And you had six reindeer on your sleigh.

We passed Mary Steele's house, and you brought her oh, some good things, and so many presents that it made my eyes just pop out big like that. You remember Mary, she lives four blocks from my house. Then I remember you coming to my house and bringing me the shirley Temple dolls and dresses. But it was only a dream after all.

This year my father had nothing to do, and he did not work for the SERA any more. He used to get can beefs, butter, grapefruit, and many dried foods. He got them once a week, but now, no more. Sometimes Mrs. Kent from next door brought something over to us, but she don't do that often.

My brother George he got sick this year, and he had been like this for a long time. Sometimes my sister Susan gets a little work to do, ~~de~~ sometimes not.

We don't eat very much nowadays, Santa. We are luckly when we have enough to eat.

That's all Santa. I don't want any dolls or dresses.

I don't want to see my mother crying all the time. And my brother, George, always coughing. It you bring him something, you would make him very happy. Maybe he will get well soon.

Please bring us something, this Christmas, Santa?

I repeat again, I am living at 657 Visalia Street near the corner of Seventh Street.

I got to close now, Santa. I have to say goodbye and I shall expect you on Christmas, thank you, Santa.

Truly yours,

Jennie Ward.

P. S. If you can spare me one little doll, I would like to have it, otherwise just bring something to eat. Thank you, Santa.

Short Story
Fiction

An Atom in a Molecule

XLIV

Jon Lee
No. Eight
4½ Hours



"Matter is that which occupies space. All matter is composed of molecules. Molecules are composed of atoms. Atoms are the smallest unit of matter that can undergo a chemical change."

I sat in the room staring at Mrs. Frank, our science teacher. I did not understand what she meant. This was my first day in the chemistry class. A boy in the back of the room said, "Can you explain what an atom is?"

Mrs. Frank answered thus, "I will give you an illustration. Then you will understand what I mean. Suppose you take a drop of water, and you divide that drop of water into two sections. You have two drops of water. You divide each drop of water into two more drops. You have four drops of water. You go on dividing until you reach the point where you can no longer divide anymore. When you reach that stage, then you have an atom. Now do you understand?"

The boy said he did and he sat down. I think I understood what the teacher said. That day I learned something about protons, electrons, positive and negative charges. I learned about analysis, I learned about synthesis. I was proud because I had learned something about the mysteries of the earth.

But there was one sentence which kept torturing me in my mind. It was: "Molecules are moving all the time. Everything that you can feel and touch is moving. The walls, the books, the tables, they are always moving." It puzzled and amazed me that such a thing was possible. I could not understand, therefore I was puzzled.

I looked at my hands and I looked at my clothes. Are they, too, composed of molecules? Are they moving and moving as they are supposed to do? I do not know. I ~~what~~ went to do. I stared at my hands. I saw the pores on my rough skin. But nothing moved. I watched.

An Atom in a Molec

But still it did not seem to move. I did not understand why. My eyes hurt me so I stopped looking.

At lunch I stared at the bread and butter. I am eating molecules. I drank my water, but before I did, I studied it carefully. I found out in an analysis experiment that water is H2O. I learned that it was composed of oxygen and hydrogen. Two important elements and gases. In a synthesis experiment I found out that by combining oxygen and hydrogen gas one could get water vapor. While I was studying my glass of water I thought of all these things. Then I realized that when I drink that water, I would be drinking oxygen and hydrogen gas in liquid form.

I smelled the water. There was no odor. I put my finger in it and pulled it out. My finger was wet. Then I wondered to myself just how many molecules of water I had in my finger. Probably a billion. Perhaps more. Then the realization came over me that science was a complicated and difficult subject. I drank the water. I felt cool. I just drank a glassful of molecules. Then I laughed to myself. Why, I did not know. Only it was so funny. I laughed.

The water soon would become my flesh and blood. But it still would be molecules. Atoms. It would be moving through my veins and supplying nourishment to the different parts of the body. I would grow big. And strong. Because of molecules. And I laughed again.

I looked at the gold ring on my second finger on the right hand. I looked at my silver wrist watch on the wrist of my left hand. Molecules. Molecules. All over me. And I said to myself. Is everything just molecules. There must be something else. There must be. What, I did not know. I wondered. I thought.

I must find out. I looked at my typewriter. Looked at my paper. Am I typing molecules? I laughed again.

That night I could not sleep. I felt the warm covers over my body. The pillows were soft and warm. But I did not feel the warmness of the pillows or covers. I thought about molecules. I thought myself. I am just a composition of billions and billions of tiny molecules. They were moving all over my body. My blood, my hair, my teeth, my nails and my flesh. Just plain molecular matter that were moving and moving all the time. That night I could not sleep. I heard an automobile whizzed by. I heard a freight train rumbling on the broken tracks. I heard the clattering of feet and shoes on the streets. I heard the snoring of the people in the next rooms. Then I laughed again. I laughed.

You, the train, the automobile, the shoes, the streets and the snoring. You do not know what molecules are. You will never know. Yet each an everyone of you are composed of molecules. You do not know it. So I am laughing. Laughing in mockery and irony. Ha! Ha! But you can not laugh back. So I laughed and laughed. Ha! Ha! Ha! You can not laugh back. Just then I heard the laughter of a young girl. Then all was silence again. She must be laughing at me, I thought. Then I stopped laughing and I cried. Because I was so unfair laughing at the streets, at the shoes and at the trains. I was sorry and I laughed no more.

The next morning I felt sad and gloomy. Why, I did not know. I wanted to laugh, but I could not. Why, I did not know. So I did not laugh that morning. I felt sad and blue. Melancoly. That morning I did not think about molecules. I forgot about them. And I was glad and then I consoled myself that I forgot.

The next day I saw a globe of the world on the table. I turned it. It went around and around. Slowly it stopped and it turned no more. Then I became concious that the earth that I am living in now is forever turning and turning. I looked at the sun. Could it be possible that we had been turning for centuries around this sun?? The sun hurt my eyes and I did not look any more. The sun, the rays of the sun are molecules. The stars in the heavens, the moon in the sky, the planets too are all molecules. The sun is the atom. The sun and all the heavenly bodies ~~are~~ is a sirgle molecule. And the earth and the planets are the electrons.

I was glad because I thought I knew so very much. I smiled.

This morning I went up to the roof-tops. I climbed the stairs and opened the door. I felt the rush of the fresh wind as it came into the room. I stepped outside. The sun was shining and I heard the murmuring talk of the tall trees. It was Sunday. All was quiet. I was alone on the roof-tops. I lay down on the couch and looked into the blue heavens. I saw the fleecy clouds floating by. I felt the wind on my face. I thrilled to the heat of the sun. And I began to think.

The wind going through the trees sounded like the music from a harp. I listened and I felt contented. For the wind when it was kind, could sound like the words of lovers on a moonlight night. But you are the same wind that uprooted trees, the same wind when you dried the housewife's clothes. You sunk ships into the deep dark sea; you wrecked houses with tornadoes for what no matter what you are you still are molecules. Just molecules. Nothing else.

I looked at the sun again. It was shiny brightly. And I thought to myself. You brought heat to the cold world. You brought

health to consumptives. You made the trees and the flowers grow. But you are the same sun that brought drought to the country. The same sun who refused to shine in the Anartic sea. But no matter what you are you still are molecules. Just molecules. Nothing else.

My gaze wandered over the horizon. I saw the tall skyscrapers of the city. I saw the telegraph poles. I saw the blues hills of Berkeley. I saw the shiny black waters of the estuary. I saw an ocean liner far away. I saw a tug boat nearby. I visioned them as molecules forever moving moving. And I moved with them.

I saw the sand and the stones. I saw the smoke coming out of the chimney. I saw a sea-gull flying by. I saw an airplane overhead. I saw the propellor revolving. They moved. And I moved with them.

Then I discovered myself. I found out what had been bothering me.

The horizon, the skyscrapers, the telegraph poles, the blue hills, the waters of the estuary, the ocean liner, the tug boat, the sand, the stones, the smoke from the chimney, the sea-gull, the airplane and the propellor are ordinary things. I never thought about them before. But now they held a fascination to me. I understood them.

I no longer have to laugh. For I discovered myself.

I discovered that I am just a little atom and this world is a great big molecule.

Short Story
Fiction

Not One, But Two!

XVIII

Jon Lee
No. Four
14 Hours.

The rain outside was slowly pouring down. Carl looked out of the window, and he saw the wet rain splashing against the windows, then, slowly trickled down the panes, and fell into the pavements. He looked up, and he saw that he was in a strange room. The walls were white, almost pure white, and the room was dimly ~~lighted~~ lit. Carl's head felt heavy as though something had struck him. There was a pain, sharp and dull, and at times when he had that pain, he felt like closing his eyes and sleep, but he was unable because he was trying to remember how he got into this strange house.

He tried to think; but before he could do any thinking, his head hurt him again, and then he slowly closed his eyes and try to sleep. Outside the rain was still pouring down, and he heard it rattling in a monotonous rhythm on the the wooden roof.

He was sleeping in a soft bed. Very warm and cozy, so cozy that he felt like burying himself into in and not have to wake up anymore. He looked at himself and found that he was wearing a clean pajama, which was a little too small for his figure, which was strong and full. On a little table, right next to the bed, there was a jug of cool water and a small drinking glass. Carl took a zip of the cold water and felt a little better. His head was hurting him and suddenly feeling his head, he felt a bandage, neatly but firmly tied, on his head.

He put his hand on the bandage and he felt something red and wet. Blood, he thought. His head was throbbing now and then, and he could not think. So he lay quietly on the bed, resting and waiting for the pain to clear up.

He heard the wind howling outside, like the wailing of a lost child, who had lost his way in the deep, dark forest.

It was very quiet all through the building. Slowly Carl began to feel sleepy and soon he fell asleep. He woke up soon and he found out that he was asleep only for two short hours. But he felt much better and the pain in his head was almost gone. He could think a little now.

He remembered now. It was yesterday when he was out in the rain. It had been pouring for two whole days now. The sky had been dull and grey, and the weather was very cold and chilly. He had been wandering around in the streets. He was poor and he had not eaten for two days. His shoes, which once cost five dollars, were all broken and there were holes in them. It was about six o'clock that he entered the park. There was a bench there that he remembered. He remembered that he sat down on it under the shelther of a big maple tree. It was very cold and wet, but the big branches of the tree offered him some shelter there; it was better than the wide open streets.

While he was sitting under the tree, he remembered how he thought about his life. Unemployed for over three months, his separation from his wife, his quarrel with his boss, and his affair with Mamie, the girl with the ruby red lips. He never saw or kissed such lips before. So divine and kissable.

He wondered where Mamie was now. Probably crying or worrying her heart out. Or perhaps she was out with Jack, her new Romeo.

Carl thought about all these while he was in this bed.

Yes, and his wife, Betty. She was not beautiful, but she had been faithful and cheerful and tried to make the best out of their lives. He remembered when they were married how happy Betty had been. She said to him then, "Carl, this is the happiest moment

of my life." Carl remembered that smile when Betty said that, the smile that showed to him two rows of pearly-white teeth, which ~~was~~ were flawless in beauty and in size.

Carl was a hard working boy, who saved every cent he made to buy a little home where he and Betty would live when they were married. It was a little brown house, small but comfortable. There was a garden, in which there bloomed springtime flowers of all varieties. And the green grass, the lawn, and the stone pavements, he remembered all that. And when he came home from work, Betty opened the door to greet him and he thought then, that he was the luckiest man in the world. He got a good and darling wife, a house of his own, and a job which supplied him with money. He used to say to Margaret, his sister, "You ought to get marry. You miss a lot of happiness and bliss that a married life contains." Martha was never a believer in marriage. She led a cheerful and fast life with her friands. She never craved for the simple life that Carl desired.

When he got married, Margaret said, "Well, I suppose you are going to settle down and live happily ever after." Carl thought about that now. The happiness ~~is~~ was shattered to pieces. Because of so many things. Betty had been very patient and stood a lot from him. But when he stayed out nights with Mamie and sometimes did not come home till the morning, she would not stand anymore. Carl did not blame her for doing what she did. Hers was a simple and pure character. She married Carl because she loved him, really loved him, not in the cheap sense, but because she wanted to make him happy. She would have succeeded too, if only Mamie, the office girl would only leave Carl alone. But she would not.

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She was after him, like a hound after an escaped convict. When Carl first knew Mamie, he did not try to make love to her. But whenever he looked up from his work, he saw that the girl was looking at him, trying to catch his eyes. When the first time it happened, Carl was a little embarrassed and he quickly dropped his glance and went back to his work. However, any moment he looked in her direction, she was always ready to catch his glance.

This continued for quite a time, and soon Carl deliberately looked up to see if Mamie was watching for him or not. And she was. One day it was raining. And Mamie did not have an umbrella. It happened that she was waiting out in the streets for a bus. Carl saw her and he offered the umbrella to her. She said, "Thanks a lot, Mr. Grant, I mean, Carl. You don't mind my calling you Carl, do you?" And Carl had answered, "Certainly not, Mamie. I could call you Mamie, may I?" He saw that she smiled and he knew that he had made a hit with the girl.

Since that night that he offered her the umbrella, he drew a little nearer to Mamie in his relationship. Once he offered to take her to lunch and she had accepted. That night when he took her to the late night show and told his wife that he was detained in the office still lingered in his memory. That was the night when he kissed Mamie and he would never forget it.

Now when Carl thought of all this, and he was thinking now, since his throbbing in the head was gone, he pondered how he was such a fool as to be led on by a girl like Mamie. He thought of his wife, Betty, and he wondered how he could betray her. He once thought that there was no one in the world quite like her. He still thinks that even now.

In the night when he heard the breathing of Betty close to him and he saw her pale but very strong face, he thought that she was the only one he really loved.

Betty was a very good house keeper. She washed the clothes and she cooked the meals. She was not extravagant, but she spend a great deal of money on books. And it was through her that Carl began to read good books and literature. Carl remembered how he used to read the Wild West Magazines and how Betty had burned them and made him read the old classics of long ago. It was then that he knew how much he missed if it was not for his wife urging him to read good books.

Before Carl was married he was just a boy little caring what the future might bring. He was what might be called a jolly fellow, very likeable and pleasing, but not dependable at all. His mother said to him once, "Carl, what are you going to do when you grow up." He had said, "I don't know. I really don't."

And his mother had asked, "But you must know. You are a big boy now. Someday it will be too late to decide. And then all this time which you might have used to your advantage would be all wasted. You think it over, Carl, and decide for yourself."

Carl was the son of a poor family. Not poor, but one which only made enough for the expenses of the house. He knew he had no new clothes like the other boys who lived in the other blocks. But he could hold his own with any other boy in fighting. At first the boys did not believe that the curly-hair, fair-face boy could be a fighter, but after one encounter, they knew and they respected him. And they did not dare to bother him again.

Carl sold papers on the streets corners until he was about

sixteen years of age. Even when he went to high school he still continued with it. On Saturdays he made some money and he gave part of it to his mother. His father had work to do, but irregular work. Besides his father was not a very strong person. Always was sick and his mother was not very strong either.

In High school Carl met Betty. The one thing that stmuck him the moment he saw her was her calm and cool altitude toward things. He remembered once in a football rally how the other girls shouted an yelled their heads off, but she remained calm all through the rally, and he admired her because she was so lady-like. They first met in the English class. She was sitting next to him on the opposite row. She was the first one who talked.

One day she asked him to borrow the eraser. Since then a quiet friendship blossomed forth. Then love, young wholesome love, drew them together. She went to dances with him. She went to shows with him. So when they graduated from high school they became man and wife. They did not married right after graduation, but they waited for almost two years. During that time Carl had saved up his money. Meanwhile his father and mother had died.

They died in the same week. Carl had been lonely then, and Betty had come and consoled him. What a sweet girl she was.

Betty was working in a restaurant after graduation. She saved her money too. Then they married and they bought a little dream house and lived there together. And they had been very happy the first few months.

But soon restlessness became to bother Carl. He could not stand the dull evenings at home. But Betty liked to stay home beside the fireplace and read and talk.

Carl liked the night life. He wished to go to the cinema or else to dine in a restaurant. He did not wish to eat at home every night. He wanted to go out once a week to dine, to a good restaurant. But Betty always said to him, "We have to economize now. We have expenses and things to look after. Besides, I rather stay home than go out."

Soon Carl found that he was drifting away from Betty unconciously. He was not so near to her now. And Betty seemed to sense that something was wrong. She did not know what.

It was then that Carl began to drift towards Mamie.

One day he had a quarrel with his wife; he was so mad that in the night he did not go home. After work, Mamie said to him, "Listen, why are you so sad tonight. What's the matter? Come up to my apartment. We could talk and I could cheer you up." Under ordinary circumstances, Carl would not have consented. But this night he was so miserable and sad he did not care what happened to him. He went up with her and he saw that she lived in a cheap rooming house. He remembered that he asked her, "You live alone?"

And she answered, "Oh, my brother, Slim, lived in the other room. But he's never home. " Carl did not know why he asked her that question except that he asked her.

He remembered that he offered some drinks to her and that he accepted. Then she offered another, and he remembered nothing more except that he grew a little drunk and dizzy. He remembered a bed and a girl. And the next morning he woke up in Mamie's room and she was beside him. It was Sunday morning.

Outside the sunshine glittered on the lawn, and the flowers sent their fragrance into the room.

Carl was still heavy in the head after the strong wine and liquor of yesterday. Mamie was up cooking breakfast. Carl came out of the room, stared around, then seated himself on a couch.

He did not go home yesterday. Then he remembered his quarrel with Betty. When Mamie came in he said to her, "I'm sorry, I must have been drunk yesterday! I ought to be going home."

And Mamie said, "Stay for breakfast anyway. You can go after that."

Yes, Carl remembered all that as clear as daylight now. Outside the rain was still dripping. And he heard the distant rumbling of lightning and thunder. His head was clear now and the pain was greatly reduced. He felt much better.

And that quarrel with Betty after he went home after that night. He would never forget it. That Sunday afternoon after his night with Mamie, he came home, a little guilty, yet a little afraid too. He entered the house and there was Betty sitting silently in the sitting room. Carl saw that she was softy crying.

He entered and for a moment no one spoke. Then Betty asked him, "Carl, where were you last night?"

"Why, I had some business to attend to . It was so late when I finished that I decided to stay over at my friend's house for the night. It was about three o'clock when I finished."

"Carl, why don't you tell the truth?"

"But I am." Carl was feeling a little strange now.

Betty grew a little mad.

"Who's the friend that you were staying with?"

"Why, Manuel."

"Manuel what?"

"Ah, ah, Manuel Smith. Yes, Smith, that's it."

Carl remembered that Betty grew a little silent and said, "Carl, I don't know what's the matter with you lately. You stay out late at night, and when you come back you make up a lot of alibis. I try my best to please you, and I work and hope for a little happiness in return. Instead you find fault with this and that. You are not your old self. You are like an old grouch now. Yes, You are. You are not the cheerful Carl that once I love and know.

"Carl, what is the matter, if only you would tell me, I could help you. I want to help you. Now we are like two strangers. We are so far apart."

Carl remembered then that he grew mad because of the doubts of Betty and he had talked a little freely. Yes, he even told her that she was trying to run his life for him. And Betty ran to her room and cried her heart out.

In the distance the lightning glared and Carl saw the relection it threw upon the white walls of the room, then suddenly the walls became dark, as the lightning died down in the horizon. It rained and rained. The door opened and a young chap, about twenty-four entered the room.

He addressed Carl, "how are you feeling? Does you head still hurt?"

"I am much better. Tell me, where am I?"

The young chap said, "You're have nothing to worry about. Just rest. I picked you up in the park. You were almost frozen and you were wet. I happened to pass my in my automobile and saw you. You must have fainted and struck you head against the stone ground. I brought you to my home and the doctor took care of you yesterday. You were unconcious when he came. He's going to drop

in today to look at you. Do you want me to phone someone in your family and notify them where you are?"

"No, no. I mean not now. Perhaps later," Carl noticed that the chap looked at him strangely then. He went out and Carl was left alone.

No, he did not want to notify anyone. He had not seen Betty for about two or three months now. There had been quarrel after quarrel between them. One day in a bitter quarrel Betty told him never to return to the house again. He went to a cheap little hotel and lived then during the time that he was separated from his wife.

It was a fifthy little place, where the house had only one bathroom, and that was very dirty. One of the windows in his room was cracked, and in the middle of the night, when the cold wind blew in from the beach, he felt the icy chills of the winter cold-ness.

In the little bare room, sad, and desolate, he worried and suffered. He thought of his wife and how she was getting along. During this period of laziness and separation he lost his job at the store and he was left without any further financial means for continuing his stay at the the little place where he was staying.

Then the landlady, a very peculiar old woman, told him to leave and he left. At that time he had but a few dollars in his pocket. He walked the streets and in the stillness of the the dark night he came to know what a bleak and miserable place a city was. He saw painted ladies with lust in their eyes strolling around late in the darkness. He paid no attention to them, because now he was too miserable and sad to think of anything like that. Cold nights he suffered in the open air. And that was not all.

He knew for the first time what priceless fortunes foods were when a person was hungry. He picked garbage cans when no one was looking.

The world was dreary. There was no justice in life. But who was to blame? He. Just he alone. Often he would sit in the park benches and watch other men who were just as poor and ragged as he was. He watched little children playing in the grass. young and happy. Often he stared at the other men who seemed to pass their time away, hours at a time, at the park doing nothing but letting the rays of the sun shine on them.

Soon it was a habit. Almost everyday Carl would come to the park and sat in the benches and stared at everything. He stared and looked, but was not interested. At night he returned to a little empty garage where he slept. The garage was unoccupied and in cold and rainy days, it was a little place which he called heaven. He asked people for money in the streets. One day, which was his lucky day he collected over a dollar and a half. He spent his money very carefully. Sometimes he ate but one meal a day.

Betty had returned to lived with her mother.

One day, late at night, in the evening he came across the street. He saw Mamie, walking with a handsome young man. He went by unnoticed as he had grown a beard by now and Mamie did not see him. That must be her new heart throb, he thought. And he passed away.

The young chap whom he was talking to not so long ago, entered. There was a doctor with him.

"The doctor's here to see you." The doctor entered and he looked at Carl's head and bandages. He changed new ones and he

told Carl not to move his head too much.

The doctor went out and the young chap talked to Carl.

"Do you feel all right?"

"I am fine now, thanks to you."

"Wait, I bring some food for you."

"I'm almost starving to death. I am going to tell you something. The last two days I have not eaten a single meal. I must have fainted away at the park vecause I was so cold and hungry. By the way what's you name?"

"Stephens. Stephens Rogers."

"I really don't know how I could thank you. I don't know what would have happened to me if you did not pick me up. I have to thank you for everything that you did for me. I'll pay the doctor just as soon as I get work to do."

"Don't you worry about that now. Tell me, have you any work to do?"

"No, I have not work for many months now. I was more or less wandering around the streets when you found me. "

Carl did not know why he was trusting this youhg man. He did not know why he was telling him all these things. Only the boy had such a honest face and that he tursted him. Then as the minutes flew by, he began to pour out his tale and he was eased. He felt as though he had taken a heavy load off his chest.

Rogers said to him, "Perhaps I could help you. The place where I am working was looking for another man. I drive a truck for the bakery. Perhaps I could get you that vacancy. You could stay here too. I live alone and I am rather lonesome. I would like to have a companion to talk to."

"It's nice of you to ask me. But I could not."

"Nonsense. Where would you go now? Stay here for a few days anyway. If that job could be yours then you could stay here if you wish. You could not go away just like this. You are not even well yet."

Carl knew that it was true. He could not leave as yet. He liked the young man.

The days that followed, Carl began to change over. He seemed more like the Carl of the long ago. Meanwhile he was staying with Rogers and the two had become to be very close friends.

One day after dinner, Rogers said, "Why don't you try to make up with your wife? I am sure it could be done. You know how women are."

"I don't know. I had been such a fool. I don't think that Betty would ever forgive me for what I have done to her. I was mad to ever think of leaving her. Now when I think back about all this, I know Betty had been right all the time. I was the one who had caused all the trouble between us. If I only had some sense then, then all this would never have happened."

Perhaps Carl would have let the matter dropped if it was not for the fact that on one day he met Mrs. Stone, Betty's mother on the street. Carl tried to avoid meeting her, but Mrs. Stone saw him first and she came toward him.

"Carl, where have you been all this time? Betty is worrying her heart out for you. She loves you still. She had forgiven you long ago. We have been trying to get in touch with you for a long time. Betty is living at our house now. You must come and see her. She's going to have a baby soon. She needs you now.

You must come and see her."

Carl was a little thrilled in the fact that he was soon to become a father. A child was the only thing that could close the gap, which had existed for so long, between him and Betty. He wished for a boy, because he liked boys better than girls.

He said to Mrs. Stone, "I know I've been an imbecile all the time. I really blame myself for all that had happened. If only Betty would forgive me."

"But, Carl, she had. In such a time as this, you must see her. Tomorrow she is going to the hospital. She asked for you many times. I tell you, don't be such a fool and you better go see her as soon as possible."

Carl was glad when he heard all this. In his heart he had yearned many times how he could go and see Betty. Somehow he put it off and now here was an opportunity for him.

The next day he went over to see her. Mrs. Stone opened the door and greeted him, "I see that you came over. I'm so glad. Betty is expecting you. Last night when I told her that you are coming over today, I am sure I saw her eyes shone with eagerness. They are coming over to take her this afternoon. The doctor saw her yesterday and said thet the time is near to take her to the hospital. She upstairs. Go see her." Mrs. Stone closed the door and asked Carl to enter.

Carl went up and he softly opened the door. Betty looked toward him and he rushed toward her. He embraced her and Betty was softly crying.

She said between sobs, "It's so good to see you again. I missed you. I should never have send you away."

"Betty, let's not talk about that now. How do you feel? You're not afraid, are you?"

"Not now, Carl. I'm a little brave now." Suddenly changing the subject, she asked, "What have you been doing? Are you working? I want to know everything about you."

Then Carl told her everything that had happened to him since the time that he left home. And in the end he said, "I'm saving money now. I'll take good care of you and the baby. And we could go back to the little brown house and live. You would like to live there again, wouldn't you?"

"Yes, Carl. I would like to go back there very much. And when the baby grows up he could go out in the big yard and play. Carl, I'm so happy. Let's forget about the past and start all over again."

At that moment Mrs. Stone entered the room and announed that the ambulance was here to take Betty away. Two men, dressed in white, came up and took Betty downstairs in a stretcher and put her in the ambulance.

"I'll come and see you tonight," Carl called to Betty as the car drove away.

When Stephens saw Carl entered the house with so much gayety, he was a little surprised.

"Listen, what's happened to you so suddenly?"

"I'm going to have a baby. I mean, my wife going to have a baby. No. I mean, oh, I don't know what I mean."

"You mean you are going to become a father. That's what you mean to say. Let me congratulate you. And lots of luck."

"Thanks a lot. Stephens, I have to leave here soon. My

wife and I are going to move back into the house where we used to live. We have more room there for the little kid."

"Of course, you have to move back there. I am so glad that the two of you are reunited again. You're not going to be so foolish as to let another girl lure you away, are you?" Stephens laughed.

"I learned my lesson. From now on, wife and home and child for me. No more fooling around."

In the evening Carl went over to the hospital to see Betty. At the hospital they told him that his wife was being attended by the doctor. Carl waited and the minutes seemed to drag slowly by. Soon they told him that he could go in and see his wife.

Betty looked tired but cheerful. She said quietly, "It's a boy, Carl. Just what you always wanted. I'm so happy."

Carl bent down and kissed Betty on the forehead. He said, "Are you all right? You must be tired. You better rest a little."

He went out of the room and he went to another room where he could see the baby.

It was a strong, lusty little chap. Rosy-pink in complexion and very round and sturdy. He asked the nurse, "How many pounds is it?"

"About seven and a half pounds. Yes, he's a strong baby, all right."

Carl returned home very happy. Stephens saw him and asked, "Well, how about passing out the cigars now. What is it, a boy or girl?"

"A boy, seven and a half pounds."

Carl was proud.

The months that followed were the happiest moments in Carl's life, a period of happiness and bliss which he had not enjoyed since his high school days. In the meantime the child had been named Stephens after a great deal of trouble. It was Betty who insisted that the child be named Stephens.

In the evenings Rogers came over very frequently to visit the pair of lovers. Once he said to them, "Seeing you like this make me wish that I should marry too. And have a little child of my own."

Stephens, the little child, was now three months old. He had grown very fast. He had golden-blonde hair like her mother. Betty was much better now and the color came back once more to her once pale cheeks. And her figure became flat and slender as of former times. Carl had built a little nursery, decorated with pink and green, in the far end of the house, and there, the little child spent most of his moments in sleeping and resting.

Carl was happy with Betty and the child. He took a new courage and enthusiasm which was once lacking in him. In his work he was cheerful and to him it was fun rather than work. Everyday he was looking forward to go home and spend the evening at home with the child and Betty. He longer longer had the wanderlust spirit in him. He did not go out so much in the evenings. He saved his money very carefully and he started a fund for the child so that when he grew up, he would have some money to go to schools of higher learning.

This happiness might have continue indefinitely if it was not for the fact that on a certain day he received a phone call from Jamie. Now when Carl heard this voice, which he had forgotten for so long a time, he was rather surprised.

"Hello, is this Carl? I must speak to you at once. Come over, I got to talk to you privately."

Now Carl did not know what was the matter with Mamie. He did not wish to continue his relationship with the girl. But he knew Mamie was in trouble by the way she sounded over the phone. Immediately he went over to her house.

She opened the door of her room and Carl went in.

Mamie was much thinner than what she used to be.

From the open door of the nearby room, through which the sunlight came through, the voice of a little baby came wailing out.

Carl asked, "Is that a child? Yours? I didn't know you've married. A boy or a girl?"

Mamie led him into the room and there on a little crib he saw a child, which strangely enough, resembled his own child.

"It's your baby, Carl," Mamie was saying this while playing with the child's hair.

For a brief moment, Carl was struck with an emotion of fear and surprise. It was impossible, it could not be his. Then, like the flash of lightning, he remembered. That night.

Carl could not speak. He looked at the child and then he looked at Mamie.

"When did this happened? When was the child born?"

Mamie answered, "Four days ago, right here." There was quivering in her voice. "I tried to let you know. But I did not dare. I was afraid. Carl, you must help me now. I don't know what to do. I haven't any money to pay the doctor. I need money to feed the child. That's why I call for you."

The moments that followed were like a nightmare to Carl. His mind and thinking were confused, and he could not think straight. Here he thought that he would become happy with Betty Stephens, and now this had to happen.

He remembered that he offered some money to Mamie and that she accepted them. He remembered that Mamie asked him what was to be done with the child. But he did not remember what he answered except that he said that he would see her again in the morning.

Carl was very quiet when he entered the door of his own home. Fortunately there was no one in the house as Betty had taken the child to see the doctor.

He went into his room and sat on the bed.

He thought of his affair with Mamie. His quarrel with Betty. his friendship with Rogers. He thought of his child, Stephens. "Why must this thing happened at this time?" He put his head into his arms and sobbed since there was no one to watch him. How could he ever explain everything clearly to Betty. And what was going to be done with the other child. The thoughts confused him and he drowsed away in his bed.

Someone was shaking him and he saw that it was Betty.

"Shame on you, falling asleep in the late afternoon. Didn't you go to work today?"

"I feel a little sick and I came home early."

"You've been working too hard. Tomorrow is Sunday. We could take a little drive up the country. I'm sure you feel much better. I like to go away too."

Carl promised that he will take the little child and Betty to the country tomorrow. That night he could not sleep.

He slept and then he awoke, and then slept again.

His trip to the country was like a dream to him. He promised Mamie that he will see her that morning. But he did not.

He came back to the house in the evening about six o'clock.

Betty said, "It was fun, wasn't it? We ought to go into the quiet country more often. Carl, why was it that you are so quiet all through the trip? Is there something on your mind?"

"Nothing, Betty. I really enjoy the trip."

During dinner he did not say anything. Many times when his wife addressed him, he did not seem to be able to hear anything. Betty said to him during dinner, "Carl, I'm sure something is wrong, why don't you tell me?"

"I'm sorry Betty for acting like I am. I am ailing with sickness, I guess. I don't feel very well."

"Why don't you see a doctor?"

"Oh, it's not that serious. But if I feel any worse, I'll see one.

In bed Betty said to him, "Carl, you know what I'm thinking of? I was thinking that perhaps it would be nice if Stephens has a brother or sister to keep him company." Suddenly she said, "We will have more children in the future, won't we, darling?"

Carl said, "Sure, honey. Anything that you say is okay with me." He kissed her affectionately.

Then he turned slowly, and two tears rolled down his cheeks, quivered, then fell silently down.

Jon Lee
Oakland

a sketch

## To My Dear Little Children

To the children of the world, 1936:

Here it is Christmas again, children, and I see by your letters that most of you wish dolls and toys to play with. You children have faith in this world of ours, and you believe in Santa Claus, and don't let anyone tell you that there is no Santa Claus. When the time comes, I shall come down your window, to each one of you, and I shall do my best to comply with your request. There are some of you perhaps who ~~would~~ will not receive what you ask for, but that doesn't mean that Santa Claus ~~do~~ does not know. Every year we have so many things to do up here in the North Pole, and we have to rush, and there is so little time to do it. There will be some of you who ~~would~~ will not receive anything this Christmas, but do not despair. Santa tries to be fair every years. Those of you who do not receive anything will get your share next year. Santa wants to bring things to everyone, but it is impossible. I have only one day to do it, and I have to travel with my six reindeer all over this wide world. And even if you don't receive anything, Santa Claus will always be thinking of you, thinking up better things for you in the Christmas that is to come. You children write to me every year, and I really enjoy your letters so much. Write to me every year, dear children, and I shall read all your letters. Up here in the north it is very cold, and sometimes the only companions I have ~~is~~ are my reindeer to keep me company. Therefore I am

very lonely, and your letters keep me interested in the outside world. A few years ago I did not know who Shirley Temple was, but now almost half of my toys are images of this little darling. Shirley is a sweet girl, children, and I am so glad that so many of you are asking for her dolls. Here it is Christmas again. Indeed my heart warms with gratitude to see the happy smiling faces of my dear little children, so beaming and glad. You should be glad dear children, for Christmas is the time when we celebrate the birth of our Lord, He who taught us kindness and understanding. We should all remember the unfortunate among our friends and neighbors and do our best to comfort and ease the pain and poverty. We should give and give generously this day. And let me tell you this, dear children, that perhaps many times you have not received what you asked for. That is because Santa knows of someone more unfortunate than you are, and Santa has given your toys and gifts to him. Now children, instead of crying and weeping of Christmas morn you should be happy and grateful that your gifts have gone to make someone more happy, more gay. Dear children, Christmas is not a time to be selfish and be thinking of ourselves. Let us remember our friends and relatives. We should all rejoice to the happiness of this day. Yes, children, there is a Santa Claus. He is around everywhere. You see him in the happy eyes of the shoppers. You see him in the toys and Christmas trees. You sense him in the air you breathe. Yes, Children, Santa is real and vital, yes. There are some who will try to tell you that there is no Santa Claus. Listen,

children. You have believed in Santa Claus for so long, and I know you shall continue to believe in Santa Claus. You hear the merry jingle of bells, you see the glittering lights on the trees, you see beautiful packages everywhere. But deep in your heart, wouldn't you feel much better if you were to help others more unfortunate than you are? It is better is it not, children, to do that? After all that is the real spirit of Christmas. It is ~~the~~ a joy giving, and not so much as receiving. You children always bring a happy warmth into my heart. You are so young and lovable, so very adorable. You have so deep a faith in me, and I do not want to disappoint you. So keep on children with your simple faith ##### in me. History may change, things may happen, but always there will be a Santa ##### Claus. Yes, there shall always be a Santa Claus as long as this world lasts. Now once again it is the time for rejoicing, the time for glad tidings and peace, peace on earth, good will toward men. Do you know, dear children, the deep idea behind this little sentence? Read it often, and try to understand it. As long as people understand this little message, there shall always be a happy Christmas to all. Well, children, I hope I have brought you a understanding of my messge. This ##### year 1936 has seen troubles and turmoil in the world, but the spirit of Christmas shall conquer all obstacles, and the world shall one day be what our Father intends it to be. So, Children, a very very merry Christmas to you all. Until next year, I shall see you again, but remember, I shall always be thinking of you always,

Santa Claus

Jon Lee
Oakland

story

# Song of the Falling Night

See how the heaven grows dark with ominous light, and feel deeply this eternal moment of death everlasting. Hear the downwards drip of gushing blood, and hear too the mighty flood of this humanity that sleeps onwards, for fear that tomorrow may never come again, and this then is the time to sing and join in the song of the falling night. Hear you not the silent hush when the trees rock and sway in melodic rhythm, and see you not the monstrous shadows playing against the whiteness of nothing? On such a night as this, it will come. But while the swaying of trees goes on, while the wind sighs again, this monotonous symphony, this wailing cresendo will rise and smash against the night. So while you may, sleep, yes, sleep in peace, for alas, tomorrow may never come again. See the leering skulls of phosphorus skeletons dancing in the air. And far in the distance there is a swift melody, the song of death, the chanting of dreary church choirs. The air is filled with lament and sadness. Hear you not this song of the falling night? Earth to earth, dust to dust, return to the earth, Lord, amen. Night revolves in dizzy circles, the day weeps for the descending night, the night for the coming dawn. Hear the loud gush of rain upon the window panes, and the hush that falls upon the earth. The dark night is calling for the day. Hear you not the gasping of breath? See you not the flickering lamp in the shadow of death? Life is ebbing low. The angels watch. The devils

smile. Eternal life, shine on, shine on, forever.

And he opened his eyes slowly, peering out into the darkness, sensing again once more this feeling of peculiar wonderment, and all around him the darkness came rushing towards him, frightening in its forecast of horror. In this darkness he saw strange things which came looming out of nowhere, and from the world beyond, strange sounds came forth. Was it just a dream, this? this dread of impending danger, this strangeness of not belonging, of being lost, lost? He had a weird feeling that time had passed, but that somehow the time that passed had not passed at all, and the time that has gone by, really has not come yet.

And he looked again into the darkness. The phosphorus clock leered out like a skull floating in mid air, glaring into his eyes. The leering skull came forwards, and he felt his body growing numb with horror. In sleep he had a strange sensation of death, of departure from the earth, and now while in wakefulness, he had that lingering feeling of mysterious sensations, and once more, he felt himself sinking into sleep. He kept thinking: It is only a dream, and I shall wake up soon. It is but a dream. I am here, in this room, and I am all right.

But when he saw the darkness dancing around him, he became frightened once more.

Could it be that today is yesterday, and tomorrow is gone? Yesterday has not come, he felt. Strange, strange feelings he cannot understand.

From the interior os his mind there came again that fear, a haunting fear of constant danger. Why, why, why? he wondered. What is it? A sleep, a sleep? Or is it only an emptiness, an end?

Fantastic dreams he had often, and awakening suddenly, he remembered each precise detail. Like a continuous dream it was, engulfing him completely, and he was unable to understand it all. In the night the world seemed unreal, fantastic, and little things became greatly magnified.

Yes, on such a night as this, on such a night as this, he will passed away. And then there would be weeping and sadness, and tears would flow continuously onwards for him, for him alone. Ah, it was so beautiful, and yet so very sad. Weeping, weeping in the night.

There is something so beautiful in death, is there not? Look at the magnificent flowers, smell the fragrance of them. Are they not really beautiful to behold? Then why all this sadness, why all this weeping, this weird sensation of depressed feeling?

He lay quietly on his bed, staring out at the darkness. It was so beautiful, yet so sad too.

Then he thought again: Yes, yes, it's only a dream, a fantastic dream after all.

This moment of silent hush, of hush, so why worry at all?

Thoughts, thoughts, one following after another in continu-

ous succession, rushing up suddenly, then receding away into the distance.

See the phosphorus lamp leering at you, laughing, ###, ha, ha, ha? Listen, hear you not its laughter of death? Ha, ha, ha. Ah, this moment has come for you to leave this earth, to be laid to sleep in the darkness of the earth, to be one of many whose bones will rot, will rot, and what had been you will no more be you, and molecules and atoms of your flesh and blood will sprout forth again from the darkness of the earth, and they shall stretch forth their arms to the fatherly sun for heat and life. And you will be part of a tree, a drop of water in vast expanse of space and matter, a twig of leaves hanging on a tree in the dense jungle, for even though you were here, and now is gone, you will still be here, even though you had gone away.

It is a sad time this night of cresendo and song, the leering of the phosphorus skull in the floating air. .

So live while you may, for tomorrow may never come again.

And he huddled close to his bed, staring up at the gaping skull which danced around him all night long.

He heard the rattling of skeleton bones, the chanting of far off voices, the moaning of an ill wind chanting in the dark graveyard.

So dance, so dance, brothers skeletons, for tomorrow I shall be with you, and my bones will rattle among yours, and my skull will leer at mortals in the solitude of darkness, brothers skeletons, dance onwards.

He felt his body winging through the cold winds of January, and he shuddered within himself.

This was the night of song, of song, and he joined in the wailing of the night, and the cresendo mounted higher and higher still, upwards towards the ominous light of the dark heaven. Yes, it was the moment of death everlasting.

Sleep, sleep, sleep in peace.

Hear you not the smashing of silence in the vastness of space? Listen to the rattling of skeletons bones, look at the leering of phosphorus skulls. Rise then with the mounting cresendo of song of the falling night, the falling night, and this is a delirious time, of time and space and vastness of everywhere. Drown yourself in the red flood of weeping tears, and be one and all then, all and one again, and join and sing the song of the falling night. Sway too and rock too like trees and leaves in rhythm with such monstrous shadows which loom and leer in fantastic shapes. Yes, night revolves again, and day weeps still for the blossoming dawn, and the night for the settling evening. Hear once the gushing of rain drops on window panes, and know and feel the hush which falls upon the earth. See the flickering lamp in the bedside, and feel the weakening pulse of the blue cold hands. And it is a time of weeping then again. On such a night as this, on such a night as this, you, too, will return to the earth.

Earth, to earth, dust, to dust, I, tonight, Lord, return to you, alas.

short story All Right, All Right Jonn Leyim
(Jon Lee)

Every Sunday at ~~five~~ four o'clock my brother and I would turn on the four tube Zenith radio to listen to Major Edward Bowes Original Amateur Hour on Station KPO, San Francisco.

Sunday, June the fourteenth, was an honor day for the city of Oakland, and also on that day, it was the Birthday of the Major. So on Sunday, June the fourteenth, we listened with great anticipation to the program, for Oakland was the honor city.

The first thing that we heard was the sound of a gong, then the voice of the magnificent Grahame MacNamee. He said, "Chase and Sandborn presents Major Bowes Original Amateur hour." Then he talked about doffee, and in the end he said, "Major Bowes."

There was loud applause which thundered from a thousand or more hands, loud and distinct. Then the Major made his customary remarks.

"The wheel of fortune spins, around and around she goes, but where she stops, nobody knows."

My brother and I had heard this phrase many times, and both of us could recite it by heart.

The program started. The first person to sing on the program was a young girl, singing, Cheribihibin, or something like that anyway. After she finished there was loud applause again.

The Major said, "All right, all right, all right." And he gave forth that familiar chuckle of his, so dear to many of us who knew him on the air.

"Next we have Walter ~~Grasadi~~ Grazzini of Oakland."

Immediately my brother and I grew excited, very very

excited, for both of us recognized the name.

Both of us heard Walter down at the Oakland Auditorium not so long ago, at the automobile show. Walter sang Songs of Songs then, but he did not even capture first prize. Nor third prize. Both my brother and I were thoroughly mad then, for we really thought that Walter should win.

Then quite accidentally when my brother and I went to the Roosevelt Theatre to see the Dark Angel, we saw Walter there, and he walked away with the first prize conducted at the Theatre the day before. That day he sang three songs. The Songs of Songs, Rose Marie, and Love Me Tonight.

And now this Sunday, Walter was in New York, and on the Major Bowes hour. My brother was so excited he could hardly control his enthusiastism.

Walter sang very well, and after he finished. we could hear the loud clapping of hands, and the Major said, "The telephone in Oakland is Oakland 1120, and in New York, Marysville 89933." And then the Major paid honor to the city of Oakland by many fluent and descriptive passages that really stirred us. My brother said, "I'm glad I'm living in Oakland."

The program went on, with one performer after another, all so good that it was extremely hard to decide which one should win.

When one really good performer finished there was always long and loud clapping, and the Major always saying, "All right, all right, allllright."

The two words were familiar to all who listened to Major Bowes. They were as much a part of him as his name.

The Major read the first telephone voting bulletin, and Walter had over twenty-four hundred votes to the others five or six hundred. My brother said, "I'm going to vote for Walter." He rushed out of the room, and went straight to the telephone.

Then in the second telephone bulletin we found out that Walter had ovef forty-eight hundred votes, in addition to the first twenty-four hundred. He was leading way out in the front.

"Our honor city next week will be Grand Rapids," the Major stated.

Tbe hour was almost through, and soon the program was ended.

My brother and I hoped that Walter will win. We are both proud of Oakland, the city we lived in with a population of three hundred thousand people.

All right, all right, Walter. The best of luck.

Perhaps someday you and I might meet up again, you famous and well known, because the wheel of fortune stops, and at the right place.

All right.

All right.

All right.

rewrite story Wailing Elegy Jon Lee

Mary, my darling. It happened.

Yesterday I was electrocuted, and now I have to explain everything to you. You suffered in silence for so long, you did not understand what it was all about. In these moments of horror and despair, of anguish, and of undescribable suffering, I felt like a lost and lonely soul, alone, and apart from the earth. Mary, I must explain to you, and you will understand it all, all this trouble and turmoil that happened. Forgive me if I failed you, but I love you so much. Mary darling, I know you will understand.

How is little Bobby? Don't ever let him find out what had happened to me. I really beg you. ~~And the two days old child, how is~~ he? I received your telegram just before they took me down the hall to that dark and solemn room where I last thought of you in life. You said you were going to pray for me, and I am so thankful to you. In my last hour I knew that someone still loved me. Then they led me to that chamber of death, and sudden ending of life came quickly over me.

Mary, my darling. Listen to my story, and don't judge me too hard when I finish. Remember always that I love you, and that I always shall. I must explain everything. Oh, Mary, it hurts my heart to tell you all this. But I must let you know, and how all this happened so unfortunately. So listen, Mary. I am sure you will understand.

It started long ago, back to the days of my father, in fact back to the days of my grandfather.

When father was twenty years of age, he made the acquaintance of Susan, a very beautiful girl of nineteen, and he fell

in love with her desperately. Father knew that he could not live without her, and he made up his mind that he was going to marry her someday. At that time father was suffering from epileptic strokes, and he was frail and weak. But he decided not to tell Susan about it.

Grandfather
~~Father's father~~ died when my father was two years of age, so father was born afflicted with this disease. In his childhood days he suffered regularly from fainting spells, and whenever he fainted, white soapy foams would gather at his mouth, and his face would turn into a chalk-white color.

Father grew up in the surroundings of the neighborhood. His father died in a fainting spell, and little did father ~~knew~~ then that he too would die in just exactly the same way as his father had died.

The years went quickly by, and soon father was a young boy of fifteen. He used to walk to school in the early morning, and sometimes he would faint suddenly, for these strokes came to him unexpectedly. But fortunately he always recovered from them.

Often in the middle of the lesson he would suddenly faint, and he would throw the whole room and the teacher in fear. Once a week he would suffer, and soon it was a weekly occurence that everyone expected of him.

Father grew up very quickly, and at this time his mother told him never to get married. She said that a person in his condition was not fitted to be wedded. Father knew that everything his mother told him was true, and he promised her that under no circumstances would he ever tie himself together

with a woman.

It was just at this very time that me made the acquaintance of Susan. And he immediately fell in love with her, and she fell in love with him. He grew fonder of her, the more he was apart and away from her.

You know that I felt the same way toward you too, Mary. So you see, father was acting just like ~~me~~.

Now grandmother found out that father was in love with Susan, and she did her best to stop it. The more she tried to draw them apart, the more the lovers were drawn closer. Secret meetings took place right in the shadows of grandmother's house.

Father took frequent trips to the country with Susan. They would lie in the soft grass, and gazed over the countryside. And thus it developed that nature drew them together too soon. It was here that flesh met flesh, and soon Susan was with child. Strickened with panic she begged father to marry her. Father had to do it.

Even at this time Susan did not know that father was epileptic. From that time on, grandmother closed her doors to father and to Susan.

It was after Susan had married father that she found the truth about father's sickness. She was filled with horror, but she dared not leave him, because she was to be a mother soon.

It was on a cold winter night that I was born, and it was the same night that my mother Susan passed away. Father hated me immensely, he blamed her death on me.

But Mary, my dear. I blamed him that I was ever born.

You would not be suffering now if I had remained in darkness and never seen the light of day. You must forgive me, Mary.

After mother tragic death, I was left alone with father. He disliked me very much, never caring for me, and he spent his time in dissipating his energy, drinking and smoking to his content.

Fortunately for me there was an old woman living near our house, and she longed greatly for a child of her own. She had a son who was lost at sea. She loved that son very much.

Ever since the death of mother, father was moody, sullen. He did not want me to go over to the old woman's house. The old woman, whom I later called Granny, cannot bear to see me suffer and live in the same house with father. She finally gave five hundred dollars to father, and she adopted me into her home. Father needed money then. He took the money and my life with the old woman began then. At that time I was about a year old.

Do you know how I happen to know all this, Mary? It was told to me by the old lady when she passed away. She was always kind to me, and I shall always remember her as a kind soul forever.

Father died not long after he gave me over to the old woman. He had one of his spells, and weakened by drinking and fatigue, he passed away. And I was a lonely orphan, friendless and lonely, expept for the care that Granny showered upon me with affection.

You know, Mary, I suffered from my first attack when I was quite a small boy. Whenever I cried too hard, I would

faint, my face would become black, and I cannot say anything. I would writhe on the floor, suffering tortures and violence. During the three or four minutes that I remained motionless, I was like a dead person, hardly breathing or moving, my face retaining a sort of black color. Then the color would gradually disappear, and I would continue with my crying.

The doctor told Granny that my troubles were caused by heredity, and that outside of my attacks in fainting there was nothing really wrong with me.

Oh, Mary, if I only were. Now I would be your bedside, loving and caressing you. How could I ever forgive myself for causting you all this suffering.

I was probably a stronger boy than father was, for I did not suffer as much as he did when he was a boy. If I cried too much ~~and the~~ then a sudden spell would come over me, then it seized me and before I knew it, darkness clouded over my eyes.

In those torturous moments of blackness, of voidness, sparks red and blue glared in fantastic designs in my eyes. Ringing, like that of an electric bell, thundered in deafening roar in my ears, then faded away, and then thundered again. Those few minutes were like a long and dreary century of not knowing, of death itself.

I never told you about this before, Mary, because it would have spoiled everything, our happiness and our home, and becasse I was madly in love with you. I only wish now that I had told you, and you know you would not be a widow with two weak and puny children.

But when I recovered from my spell of fainting, I was like

The doctor told Henry that my troubles were caused by heredity, and that obstacle of my studies in realizing there was nothing really wrong with me.

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I never told you about this before, Mary, because it would have spoiled everything, our happiness and our home, and because I was madly in love with you. I only wish now that I had told you, and you know you would not be a widow with two small and puny children.

But when I recovered from my spell of fainting, I was like

a compàete new person. Yes, it was strange. It always comes and goes just like that.

The years went by, and Granny was old, her face became wrinkled, like the sagging skin of an old apple. One night the rain fell heavily, and the chill winter wind blew with raging coldness, and Granny succumbed to a bad cold.

Granny was about sixty then, and she knew that her end was near. One day she said to me, "Fred, I am getting old, and there is something I must let you know. I am dying, and I want you to listen to what I am going to tell." Then she related the history about my father and about my grandfather to me.

Mary, I cried then. I knew what a scoundrel father was. But I was one too, Mary, I should never have married you .

I cried at Granny's bedside, and I fainted. I suffered one of my attacks then. When I recovered I saw Granny shocked and frightened, and she stared at me with glassy eyes, and I knew that death was near. She said softly, "Don't ever get married, Fred."

And she passed away that night.

Yes, Mary, she died just like that. I wished I had followed Granny's advice. But I married you, Mary, and you had a very unhappy life. How you must hate me for doing what I did.

After Granny's death, life was empty and barren, and her death stripped me of friendship, love, and devotion. And I was left alone in the world. How I remembered my heartaches, my sufferings, and utter hopelessness of the futile existence of my childhood.

Mary, I cried then. I know that a wonderful father

you.

I cried at Jenny's behalf, and I fainted. I suffered

one of my attacks then. When I recovered I saw Jenny crushed

and frightened, and she stared at me with eyes open, and I

knew that death was near. She said so!, "Don't ever get

hurt.

You'll be pained away that night.

Yes, Mary, she died just like that. I wished I had

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Weeks passed into months, and months became years. I was twenty-one. Then I met you, Mary. Do you remember the day? I can still see it in my memory just as clearly as if it was yesterday. I fell in love with you instantly the first time that I met you.

You must have thought a great deal about me. I remembered your devotion and love. You must have believed everything I told you. Do you remember the happy days we used to have? The fun and joys? It's so different now, isn't it, Mary?

Those days will never come again. And I am lonely.

We were happy then, and there were light and happiness in your eyes. Who could fortell that tragedy was lurking in the shadows and was ready to strike, and to strike with such an electrifying blow that our dreams, desires, and hopes would be completely shattered, into splinters and fragments beyond repair. Mary, darling, my poor heart is crying.

We enjoyed three years of happy married life, and then sadness descended upon us. I should have told you then, Mary, but I did not want to. Your were with child then. My conscience had been annoying me for such a long time, and now I have to tell, and don't judge me too hard.

I never told you that I was an epileptic person. Beside I found no need of it to inform you, since I did not suffer from a single attack since I grew up. But it was that night that something happened. The fires of the disease were smothering in me, and on that night it flared and ran like a wild forest fire, and there were no need and means of extinguishing them.

I remember that night extremely well. How could I forget?

I remember the bright thunder that rabled and thundered throughout the night. I was asleep, but something inside of

me told me that something was wrong. I woke up with a start. I looked around and somehow I knew that something was wrong. That strange, odd, peculiar feeling of being lost, being sick, came over me that for one sshocking moment I was like a lost soul, lost in the darkness of the deep night, the obscurity of the blackness. I heard your breathing, so regular and even near me, Mary. Then because of unexplicable fears inside of me, I felt myself all over. I pinched myself to make sure that I was not dreaming and that I was fully awake.

Out of the night the ringing, that familiar ringing, thundered into my ears. It rang, it sang, it whistled until I had a feeling that my ears would broke. With the speed and quickness of a tornado, it died down, and I heard your breathing again, Mary. Outside it was raining in torrents and the waters gushed and splashed in the muddy puddles. The bright lightning flared and shone with flashing speed, then lost itself inthe shadows of the dark night.

It seemed to be a night for spirits to venture out. A night when the supernatural dominated the scene. It was the night when the fires of epilepsy leapt and jumped inside of me. I felt weak and very cold indded. I would have waken you up, Mary, except that I was afraid you would wonder and try to find out what was the matter with me. I got quickly out of bed, and put on my robe. I had a weak and fainting feeling inside of me, and I went and sat on the small stook, you know that one, Mary, the one which you covered with the red woolen cloth. I sat down there, and I put my head on my hands, thinking. I said to myself, "I must tell Mary about myself sometime. This could not go on forever. She would find out someday anyway."

How long a time I sat there I don't remember, but it was in the early dawn of a cold morning that I finally woke up. I hurried back to bed. I slept for one or two hours, and then you woke me up. Remember, Mary? Well, I was going to tell you everything except that I was feeling so well that I thought perhaps some other day would do.

I never told you about that night. A long time after that I did not suffer from those strange feelings, and I did not think it necessary to tell you about them. Well, the days went by, and soon I found out that I was to be a father again.

When Bobby came you were so happy. And you said to me this time, "I hope we will have a girl this time."

You know, I was rather surprised at Bobby. He was born such a strong and lusty baby that no one would have ever guessed that his father was an epileptic man. I was glad of that. Because of that, you would never know about me.

Your time to have the boy was coming very quickly. You were going to the hospital in a few days. And I hired Clara, a young nurse to take care of Bobby while you were away.

Clara was beautiful, and young. She and Bobby got along very well.

At this time I was lonely, Mary. I missed you. After the long hours of hard work, I came back and found not a soul to welcome me. I was lonely and I wanted friendship.

The nurse had eyes that looked like diamonds against a dark velvet background. They glistened, and the magnetic fires of her beautiful eyes pulled me toward her. I saw her long lashes fluttered now and then, and that silent gazing of hers. Oh, Mary, if you could only understand.

I did not try to make love to her, but in my moments of leisure I visioned those magnetic eyes drawing me toward her. I saw those dark, arched brows. Oh, Mary, I fell completely in love with her. I could not help it. I thought much of you, [redacted]d, but at that time the fires inside of me leapt and jumped. I was not myself.

Often at night I dreamt of her, seeing her, feeling her, so lovely, so white, so very desirable, so much so that I must love her deeply. One morning I grapped her in the hall and kissed her passionately. I can feel a tingling sensation running through me. But Clara pushed me away, slapped me in the face, and went silently away. I didn't know what to say. I didn't imagine Clara would mind.

That night I had a terrible nightmare. I had strange feelings, and my heart throbbed and palpitated with haste, and the hot lusty blood gushed and ran like a wild forest fire. I had a desire to go to her, and grab her. I wanted to kill her, to feel her loviless in death itself. I could not explain this sudden desire of death. I woke up in the night, and my hands trembled and shook violently, and I could not control myself. I crept silently out into the hallway. The lights were all off, and not a single sound could be heard in the quiet household. In my barefeet I crept silently toward her room. The door was not locked. I turned the handle, and went inside. Clara was lovely in sleep, and her white throat glistened in the soft moonlight. I plunged forward and grabbed her. Clara did not utter a sound. A few minutes later I released my hold, and Clara was dead. I went back to my room, satisfied. I slept.

Morning dawned. I was dazed and bewildered.

Bobby came screaming into the room.

"Clara is dead, father, Clara is dead!" He sobbed out loudly. I woke up with a start. My head throbbed with haste and my pulse jumped in uneven jerks. I glared with an intense gaze at Bobby. I saw that throat white and smooth. With an almost hypnotic gaze I looked within the depts of his light blue eyes. My desire to strangle him became acute. Bobby became greatly frightened. He edged away slowly.

Suddenly, like a flash of bright lightning, I felt strange again. My desire to kill faded away, and I was normal once again. My heart did not palpitate, and my hot blood slowed down. My hypnotic gaze faded, then died away.

Mary, this is the way it always happens. It comes and it goes just like this.

I said to Bobby, "What is the matter, son?" I forgot about last night's dream.

Slowly he lost his fears, and he approached me.

"The nurse is dead. She's dead." At that moment he broke into violent sobs, and he cried, his body trembling.

But he controlled himself in a few minutes, then he dried his tears and looked at me with silent gaze.

I sat there, and I did not know what to do. I vaguely, very vaguely, remembered grabbing hold of someone's throat in my dream. I remember waking up and hearing the rumbling of thunder. I remembered creeping silently over the house.

Suddenly the thought came to me. I must have killed Clara. I became acutely afraid.

I sent Bobby out of the room. I sat for a long time, while

the clock on the wall ticked away in monotonous slowness. Every beat of the clock made my nerves jump. I was lost. Then a sudden pounding of the door returned me to normalcy. Fearfully, with shaking steps I went up to the door, and slowly, cautiously peered outside. There was Bobby with three policemaen standing on the steps.

Oh, Mary, I felt caught right there, unable to get out. In those seconds I was planning an alibi, anything to lie.

I controlled myself. I hastily opened the door. The police came in.

One of them said in a rough voice, "I understand that there was a person killed here. Where is the dead body?"

"Upstairs," I said, and I was startled by the strangeness of my own voice.

The corpse was in the bed, exactly as I left it. The police said, "She's murdered!" Then he turned to me, "Do you know anything about this?"

I answered with a tremulous quivef in my voice.

"I know nothing."

"Why are you so nervous?" one of the policemen demanded. "Why did you not call the police sooner?"

He looked at me with a strangeness that frightened me. It was a suspicious look, intent, searching. I grew afraid all of a sudden.

Then Mary, you know what happened. That strange feeling came over me again. The hot blood pounded in my ears. My head turned. I confessed without knowing what I was doing. It was only coming out of my trance that I found out that I had confessed.

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I said quickly, "I really didnot mean to kill her. It was during one of my moments of attack. You must believe me. I'm subject to epileptic attacks."

The policeman looked at me and said, "Tell that in court. They might believe you." And I noticed a trace of mocking in his tone.

I was taken to headquarters where question upon question was showered on me. Shaking with fright, trembling with fear, I answered them as in a dream. How many blunders I made, I did not know. I could feel the sweat dripping down my face. I remembered faces leering at me. Hands pushing me, hands slapping me. It was a torturous third degree, one which I shall always remember the rest of my life. And that life was not very long, was it, Mary?

I saw hands pointing at me saying, "Guilty! Guilty!" I saw the black face of Clara.

I yelled out loud, "I'm mad! I'm insane! You cannot convict me!" No one paid any attention to me. A doctor came in to examine me. He stated that I was very normal.

I wished then that I could have one of my spells. But nothing happened. I was lost. Never to be found again.

The events fused together. I saw a courtroom, the prosecutor shouting at me. Most of all, out of that faded memory, I heard that sentence, "We, the jury, find the defendent guilty of murder in the first degree."

Mary, my heart sank when I heard that. Then the judge pronounced the sentence and I was led away to prison.

Mary, what more can I say. I was guilty, there was no way out. I was to die in three months.

I was taken to headquarters where questions upon questions were asked me. I remember that I was in a daze. I remember a policeman looking at me and saying, "Tell that in court, you'll have plenty of time." And I noticed a trace of mocking in his tone.

I was taken to headquarters where questions upon questions were asked me. I remember that I was in a daze. I remembered faces leering at me. Hands pushing me, hands clutching me. It was a torturous third degree, one which I shall always remember the rest of my life. And then life came in to examine me. He swore that I was very normal.

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I was led to my three months

What more can I do but to spend those long dreary days in the barren dungeon separated from the outside world forever. How well I remembered those days. Days which will never erase themselves in my mind, days which will linger forever and always in my memory.

The grey walls of the prison, silent and challenging. They seemed to laugh and mock at my helplessness. The long iron bars of the gate, strong and unbreakable. They mocked me too. Waling back and forth, sitting down smoking one cigarette after another, lying in bed thinking, worrying, and the days long, long, never ending.

The same monotonous scenes, day after day, the same faces, leering at me. Oh, Mary, how could I stand this all.

I knew nothing more of the outside world. I was apart from it. I was dead to the world.

The days passed slowly and mechanically by. I waited, but inevitable death was slowly approaching to claim me away. And I was ready.

My day for the electrocution arrived. I was not afraid. But as the day passed slowly by, and the fatal hour came close, I lost my courage, and I broke down completely, utterly. The scene of the murder, the white throat, the men in the jury, and a panorama of scenes clustered themselves in my mind, strange and silent.

I had that strange feeling again. Fires seeped through my eyes. Boiling blood gushed in my veins. I called out into the hallway, "I'm crazy, yes, crazy, do you believe me now? Look at me, I'm shaking, ha, ha, I'm mad!" The guard came over and said, "Keep quiet." He said to another man, "Bring

The grey walls of the prison, silent and obnoxious. They seemed to laugh and mock at my helplessness. The long iron bars of the gate, strong and unbreakable. They mocked me too. Walking back and forth, sitting down smoking one cigarette after another, lying in bed thinking, worrying, and the days long, long, never ending.

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. "I'm shocking, ha, ha, I'm mad!" The guard came . "Keep quiet." He said to another man, "Poor

him a drink."

They brought a strong bottle of wine and put in on the table.

Mary, that feeling went away then, and I was normal once again. Not long after that I received you telegram. I read and reread it over and over again. I devoured every word that was in it. I felt low because I had caused you so much trouble. I found out that you knew nothing about me, and that the doctor did not let you know for fear it might injure you. But at the last moment, just before I passed away, they told you, and you sent me the telegram.

I know, Mary, that if you were able, you would be at my side, helping me, cheering me. In my last days.

Your telegram gave me courage. I took a sip of wine, and I felt warmth coming overme.

The tragic part of the whole thing was that I was really insane, but fate changed everything, and instead of going to hhe institution, I was placed in an electric chair.

At the hour of death a priest came in, and he was holding bible in his hands. I had an hour left before they were to lead me to the chair. I told the priest that I wanted to be alone, and he went away. I smoked one cigarette. Then another.

The last words of Granny came to my mind, "Don't ever get married." But it was too late to think about that now. The minutes beat into my heart, pulling it.

The priest came back, and there were some other men with him. The teare came gushing to my eyes, and I could not see clearly. We started to walk slowly toward the dead chamber, and the shoes of the walking men thundered and

echoed through the empty corridors. We stopped, but I did not see anything. A piece of cloth was placed around my eyes. I was led to a corner and they put me down into a place where I sat. A priest was softly praying, and then all was quiet. So very quiet that I could hear my beating heart pounding within me. Then electricity entered me and I was killed instantly. No pain, no suffering, I died just like that.

I thought of you, Mary, all the time there, and I could not let the though of you out of my mind. My childhood days and scenes drifted into my imagination. I saw Granny dying at the bedside. I saw you as I knew you. I love you Mary, I still do, always remember that.

I was a scoundrel. Like my grandfather, like my father. They all got married and tragedy lurked in each marriage. Grandfather died a tragic death, and so did father. Mother died amidst sad surroundings.

No one could ever understand what I had suffered. Not even you. Only I myself could ever know, the real agony of seperation from the loved ones, the suffering of the mind. It was hell, It was torture.

Remember I always love you, Mary.

Mary, forgive me! Forgive me!

In the hospital room the walls were white and silent, and a soft wailing of a new born babe cried out. The baby was crying loudly. The mother was resting peacefully, and there was a small boy near her, admiring his mother. There were tears in her eyes. She was crying and trying to hold her tears back.

Suddenly the boy asked her, "Where is father, mother?"

The woman answered, "Daddy is far away."

She turned her head, and she softly murmured to herself, "Listen, Fred, they would never know."

Then she wiped her eyes, but the tears kept coming, and continued dropping, slowly.

The soft cry of the new born baby wailed through the room where the walls were white and silent.

rewrite

## Chapter Fourteen

The city lay dark and secret in sleep, and far away the water reflected the brightness of the moon. The cool breeze swirled in from beyond, soothing Joel's body, and once again he felt a surging of movement within him. The night was sweet in tenderness, and the breeze caressed his body until he was cool with love and feeling.

Brightly, against the velvet blackness of night, the stars glistened out, and for the moment, a new and tranquil peace settled over the night. The power of life was evident everywhere, in the rolling of the placid water, in the twinkling of the stars above, in the wind winging its way through the air. From everywhere it surged forth. The night was magnificent in silence. The sky, the moon, the water of the bay massed together in mutual understanding.

How different everything is now, Joel thought. How different it was, not so very long ago. Once he had come to this very same place, disgusted with life. He had looked down upon the water then, and saw only miseries and sadness there. Now all of that was gone, and he saw now only a stirring of life beneath the dark water of the bay, a secret movement of life which he understood in his heart, but which he cannot express in words. There no longer is death anywhere.

He felt a strong desire to be alive and vital, to breathe in a deep breath of pure fresh air, to know the magnificence

of the earth in his body, to feel the surging of life and movement in his blood. In this supreme silence now, the darkness softly caressing him, his eyes bright with life, he thrilled again at the secrecy of the earth, at the mere significance of being alive. Death was so far away now, long departed into the silence of time.

He glanced far out into the horizon, towards where the sky met the water. The bright lights of the city glittered across the bay. The bay lay in sleep, quietly, calmly, yet beneath this calmness there was life and movement. It stirred with the awakening of life, and watching the water softly rising and falling, Joel felt himself stirred immensely. And swept into this revelation of dreams, he felt uplifted. The wind felt cool on his face. There was life everywhere, even in the silence itself. And standing there, his whole being truly and really awake, Joel knew that finally he was in full possession of the force of life.

It was everywhere, only he was too blind to see it before. It was in the rippling of the dark water, in the coolness of the wind, in the very essence of living and breathing.

From the darkness now there crept forth a tenderness which he never felt before. His very self softened under the enchantment of the affectionate mood which came over him. Drawing in a deep breath, his eyes inspired wonder, Joel proclaimed his love for the tender night.

Somehow there is no death, his inner self seemed to whisper. Live for the moment and rejoice.

Now gone forever and completely were his worries. No more did the death of Hodge haunt his mind.

This feeling of discovery did him more good than years of medicine and doctoring. He looked around him and was overwhelmed at the mysterious force which was everywhere. He had acquired a new confidence, he knew. His heart light and gay he made his way back to the house. And coming into the house, leaving the cool tender night behind him, Joel felt a freedom which he never experienced before. It was great to be alive.

He went to the window and looked upon the dark city. Even in the hush of sleep there was life. He undressed quickly and crept into bed. In the interior of the room he heard a voice. Somehow there is no death, and hearing it, he drifted into sleep. The moments that followed were supreme and joyous.

Affootstep sounded against the door, and glancing towards it, Joel saw his mother enter.

"Are you asleep, Joel?" she called out.

"No, mother."

"I came in to say goodnight," she said, coming close to him. She leaned down and kissed him. His eyes softened with affection. He put his arms around her, feeling for the first time a warm affection for her.

"It's so wonderful," he said softly, "I never felt like

this before."

She looked down at him. "You've been looking much better lately, Joel."

He smiled at her. "I'm feeling much better."

She leaned down and kissed him again.

"Goodnight," she said, going out quietly.

"Goodnight, mother."

He darkened the light, knowing that deep within him he had discovered a new power, and that no matter what happens, there is always hope and courage.

## Chapter Fifteen

It was a warm summer night, and the whole land was bathed in the heat of the hot evening. The car shot rapidly along the country road, the tall dark trees flitting quickly by on both sides. The wind felt cool on Joel's face, but when the car slow down, it felt uncomfortably hot. Darkness descended rapidly, the hills came looming up like a black wave, then fell gracefully away into the ground. Vivid, unforgettable memories of country days came rushing back to Joel's mind, days of beauty, of discovery which he would always remember. The whole land around him had a vivid beauty all its own in the darkness. The trees and hills hid behind the cloak of darkness, afraid of revealing themselves. The serene and majestic silence of night settled everywhere, and a new tranquillity came over the land. Up above the blue of the sky was yielding to the blackness of the coming night, while far away in the horizon where the sky met the water, a stream of blue was still visible. The stars flared everywhere, forming a dazzling array of designs all over the sky. Blackness swallowed up the whole sky, and soon it turned dark.

Victor kept his eyes straight on the road, remaining silent. Victor kept looking out of the window, admiring the scenes of nature. He glanced at his mother now and then. She felt contented, seemingly enjoying the night ride.

Joel knew as he rode along, that at last he had really

captured the supreme thrill of living. He felt greatly inspired by the peace around him.

He thought of Madge again, but now there was no longer any fear in his heart. He thought of her as he remembered her, just a little girl drifting into sleep that winter night. Suddenly a loneliness came upon him, and he felt his eyes grow wet.

But his heart no longer had a fear of the future. He now possessed hope and confidence, a real assurance that he was in full possession of the mysterious force which he was not able to understand before. But now he understood.

His former years of tedious illness had no doubt discouraged him, but they only made this final discovery of life only more sweeter, more tender. How wonderful everything is, he thought. Not so long ago he was dissatisfied with life, with no ambition or hope to accomplish anything. Now he was filled with a zest and ambition which sent a tingling sensation through his body.

It was such a glorious night to go riding without any care of the future. There was no need for talk. There was a comfort and understanding in this silence. Joel glanced at his mother again. He saw a brightness in her eyes.

Enraptured again by the glorious feeling of being alive, Joel's eyes gleamed brightly with hope. He drew in a deep breath. The fresh evening air toned his body with strength. Suddenly he felt something surging through him, and he found

himself definitely in full possession of this mysterious force. It was like an electrical current running through his body, bringing life to every vital part. A new understanding came over him. He felt the invisible touch of new life in him. He glanced out of the window. As far as he could see the whole countryside was deep with sleep. There was a stir in the land that is not visible. There is a voice in the air that is not audible. There is a surging of life everywhere. Suddenly Joel understood. He could see the stirring and movement in the blackness. He could hear the whispering of the wind in the air. Then he realized that he was just a small part of the universe, and everything around him was just a small part atom which formed the earth. Everything was bound together by a strange secret force. The trees on the land, the water in the bay, the birds in the air, the birth, the death of people, they were all a flow of current of the natural life.

Joel's vision cleared. Nothing clouded his mind. In the darkness the land around him was clear and beautiful. He understood everything now. He had acquired a new courage, a new faith and it was now flowing through his body, giving him strength and power. He relaxed back in his seat.

He turned around and caught his mother's eyes. In them he saw understanding. There was no need for words.

Joel glanced out of the window again. How mysterious was nature, but now he understood her, and there was no

more mystery about it.

The car speeded along the road. Joel felt himself rushing towards a future of hope and courage. In his ears he heard the communing of nature, in his eyes he saw the life and movement, and in his heart he understood.

The car speeded along, and he knew that life was wonderful.

Lying down under the trees, the blue sky sweeping onwards towards the horizon, the rippling of the lake slowly flaying over the rocks, Joel felt like a new person. Had such a short time in the surrounding of the country made such a difference in his attitude towards life? He was entirely changed, inwardly, outwardly, seeing life from a different angle, understanding it more clearly.

He felt a current beneath the earth, gushing forth in all its magnificence, bring life and movement to everything within its reach. The whole land for this joyous moment lived fully. As Joel lay there, he thought: If I could only retain this enthusiasm on life and living, I would never have to worry again. He looked far into the sky, and was happy in his contentment.

Dazed in his bewilderment of living, Joel was not conscious of time sweeping by. Morning had given way to afternoon, and dark shadows crept over the rich earth. When suddenly Joel realized that this was to be his last day in the country, the brightness and gladness of his mind flowed away. Drifting into a meaningless stream of thought he saw himself back at the old house, sitting in his chair, worrying about life and its mysteries.

He looked around him again. Was all this just a dream? No, it was real, the trees, the sky, the grass, even himself, they were all real and vital. But soon all these would be gone, and he would be back in the city again.

Soon all this would be a memory, just a memory.

Joel got up from under the tree, and with a heaviness in his heart, he made his way back to the ranch. He took one more look around him, then he turned around slowly, and made his way back.

Then he went into the house, gathered his things together and reluctantly he went into the car, waiting. Victor came down after awhile, and he started the motor. The car moved forward slowly, then quickly gathered speed. The land flew by, and soon the car was on the highway speeding towards the city. Darkness settled everywhere, and up above the stars shone out bright and glistening. The sky turned black, forming a dark velvet blanket for the stars.

Joel remained silent, unable to say anything, while all around him the scenes he loved so much flitted quickly by. Suddenly a loneliness came upon him, and a sob caught in his throat. His eyes filled with tears, dripping down his cheeks. He blinked his eyes, unable to understand the sudden sentimental feeling of his. Unconsciously his mind drifted back to the scenes he had just left. Yes, they were only memories now.

Twisting, turning, the car shot onwards towards the city, speeding across the winding road. Then suddenly it entered upon the city, Victor turned around and said, "We're home."

"Yes, we're home," Joel said suddenly, blinking away the tears from his eyes.

Short Story
Fiction

The Living Dead

XLV

Jon Lee
No. Five
3½ Hours

When the earth thunders and the heavens rain death, and the projectiles whistle through the forest, and the youths fight and slaughter, they do not tell you. When the ground becomes red with the dripping of human blood, and when the heads of the youths are cut off by flying hand grenades, they do not tell you. When the ships sink, and the ~~human~~ goes down with it, they do not tell you.

When youth meets youth and murders and cuts and kills, they do not tell you. The waiting in the deep dark trench, the slow starvation of poor soldiers, the march through the rain and mud, these you do not know. You do not know why the heavens heaved. You do not know why the earth rumbles. Nor why men kill men. Nor do you know about the lust, the slaughtering, the hatred, the fear of that glorius venture known as war.

Instead you stay in your little house. Slowing dying, dying. Better for you if you are to be blown by a bomb. Or to be killed by a bullet. Then your death would be instantaneous and quick. Then you would not have to suffer.

You would be finished. You would be through.

But instead you live on. Suffering, working, worrying and slowly dying. Dying every minute, every second, you are dying. Pains and agony you truly know. For you are dying. You are dying.

You do not die in the midst of excitement, nor in the glories of war. You do not die while the bugles play nor do you die with the lowering of the flags.

You do not know Flanders Field where the crosses grow row on row. And where the orange poppies grow.

You are dying as you are. While you work, while you play, while you sleep, poor boy, you are dying.

You keep a cheerful smile. You refuse to be a quitter. You fight it out to the finish. In the streets you laugh and talk as though nothing is the matter with you. But you are pale and thin. Still you continue with your laughter and joy. I am proud.

You are a living dead. You are alive, but you are dead. You are dead, but you are alive. Let the heavens rain their death, let the soldiers cut and kill. Let the ships sink into the tombs of water, but you are here, dying bravely. Just as bravely as those who die and later decorated with a medal or a cross in Flanders Field. You are brave and I am proud.

Poor boy, you are so brave.

They tell you that to die for your country is patriotism. That you should go out and kill men. Men like you. Men who live, love, and work like you. They say your enemies should be kill. They supply you with airplanes, with torpedoes, with guns, with swords, with submarines, with cannons, and with gas. No matter how you kill, they say, you must kill. Because it is for your country that youare doing it. You are to do it because it will mean the world is being made safe for democracy.

They tell you to enlist in the army or the navy. Or in the air corps. They tell you that anyone who had any love for his country should go out and kill.

You, poor boy, hears about it. You go to enlist. You want to become a soldier. You are weak and thin. But you go to enlist just the same. For your friends tell you that you are patriotic and that they are proud of you. You are stirred by the flattering and praise. You are going to war. You are going to spill human blood so that democracy could continue.

You see the soldiers marching on the steets, and the band is playing. Mothers are weeping, sweethearts steal moments of heavenly bliss. You get excited and you feel it your doing to join these brave young lads. They are marching to their death and their parents, the friends, their girls are cheering. They are cheering and shouting. And seeing this, my heart cries.

You join in the cheer and the shouting. For a moment you are the soldier, the young marching soldier in a handsome uniform. You see yourself being decorated with medals and you are proud. You see yourself killing men and slaughtering lads no older than you are. You will not know why you are doing this except that if you do not do it, then others would kill you. Poor boy, I am sorry for you.

In your imagination you sees flags waving, bands playing, soldiers marching, marching for the glories and success of a victory. Poor boy, you must have part of this for yourself. So you join.

But they would not let you. They tell you that you are thin. They tell you that you are not tall enough. They tell you that you are weak. They would not let you go. Your lungs are bad, they tell you. So with sorry steps you go back to your home. Friends tell you that you are a coward. You have not love for your country, they say.

You are dumbfounded. You do not know how to answer. You become quiet and dull.

You are no longer the soldier. You are just a poor young boy, weak and dying. Poor boy, my heart aches to see you. But you are brave. Very brave.

Your mother, poor and weak, saysto you that you must not worry nor weep. But you weep and worry all the more.

The little town where you are living is devoid of strong young man. Here and there you see an old man. The ladies and women look and stare at you everytime they see you. You feel embarrass and your face grows red. I do not blame you, poor boy. Here you do not hear the roar of the cannons nor the explosion of the bombs. Instead you hear the loud barking of the dog when he sees you. The murmuring of the green trees when you pass by. The days come and go. But you are dying.

The longs days are like a torture to you. The nights are like a centmry, long, long. And the days, weeks, months, they are long too, are they not? Poor boy, do not worry. For life is short, very short. So enjoy and laugh for life is short.

Know that you are alive now. Eat now because you are able to eat. Sleep now because you are able to sleep. Do not worry for the days are short and soon death will come. Poor boy, death will come to you and to me and to everyone. Do not worry. Laugh.

So go out into the steets. Walk on them. Go on with your work. Enjoy the sunshine. Smell the fresh air. For soon they will nott be. They will be gone and once gone, then no more, poor boy. Do not worry.

Let the war continue. Let banners wave, let spies get shot, let bombs explode. Forget about them. Be yourself. Say to yourself that there is no war. That you are a strong and healthy lad. Imagine yourself to be tall and strong. The equal of any other boy. Go on with your work, with your life and with yourself. Forget the war, poor boy, then you will be happy.

Oh, poor boy, I am so sorry to hear that your mother died the other day. My heart weeps for you. You are alone now, so alone and sad. And I am sad too. They tell me that you sobbed and cried. Please do not. You are weak and you must take care of yourself. Recovery for you is impossible now. And you know it. I know how you must have suffer through all this time. I admire your courage. The war is going to end very soon, I am sure. Then you will see your old friends coming back and you could talk to them about war. Do not worry for perhaps by that time you might be dead. Dead and buried in the cold grounds of the cemetery.

Yes, the many weary months pass by quickly, and war is ended. You go and greet your friends. But many are missing. They died in the field of battle. The boy from next door is dead and you are sad for he is your very best friend. Poor boy, you are not feeling well. I could tell by your appearance. You are coughing now. It must be very bad. Your face has a ghostly pallor. And you are so thin. The other day you spilled blood on the sidewalk. It is a bad sign. Poor boy, you are dying so slowly and sadly. Sometimes I wish you were dead. Dead, so that I could not look at that thin bony face anymore. If only you had gone to the war.

Perhaps by now you would be buried on the earth. Over in France. You be famous because you had died for your country. And your name will be remembered by many.

If death had come to you then, now you would not be suffering so badly. The days draw near, poor boy, when you will soon have to leave this earth.

Then you will die, and no more worrying. My heart cries to see that day draws near. But it is coming, coming, poor boy.

Today you fainted after a coughing spell. The blood gushed out like a torrent. I am afraid for you, poor boy. You are so thin.

Your day is come. I am sure. You will not last much longer. The earth soon will receive you with open arms. There you will rot to dust and become the earth. You will become the sand and the stones. You will be earth itself.

Your day is come. It draws nearer and nearer everyday. And I am so sorry for you. Poor boy.

Although the bugles may never blow, and the flags may not be lower, and no cross or poppies near your grave, I shall always remember you as the brave consumptive who live and work and laugh all the time while he was dying. Although you might not be decorated with a medal of honor or receive a promotion in the army, although you have never captured any enemies or sacrificed your life for your country, I shall always remember how brave and strong you are in you spirit.

You are spilling blood. And life is short. Death is near. I bid you farewell. I shall always remember you.

Although the earth does not thunder in you ear and the heavens does not rain its death upon you, you are suffering.

Terrible as they are, you would have a more easy time. The explosion of a bomb or the cut of a grenade and you would have die. Die without suffering.

But you are dying so slowly and it chills my heart to see you.

The heavens clouds. The winds howl, Death is calling, calling. Poor boy, your hour is here. You are going. I shall remember you and think of you as braver than the soldiers who went to war.

VIII

The mother was dying slowly, and when she felt that the end was near, she called her son forth and said to him, "Always remember, do not question the authority of your elders. After I go away I want to know that you will bbey me."

The son nodded his head and thus the mother died. The son found himself homeless, since a home without a mother was not a home to him. The father was busy with his work, and he did not pay any attention to his growing son.

Now into his sad and lonely days, the son often thought of his mother, and he wondered where she was, and what she was doing. Many times he went to the grave and wept unashamed, crying and weeping for his departed mother.

Now the father found that it was hard to get along without a woman in the house, and he soon found himself a woman, and then they were married. This woman had a son, and she loved him dearly, since he was her only son, and she never scolded him or beat him, and she loved him with her whole greedy heart. When the father told the son that he was going to be married, the son was very much surprised, since he did not think that his father was the marrying kind. He knew way in advance that no matter how good the step-mother might be, she would never take a place in his heart like his own mother.

But even if the step-son wishes to love his step-mother, he could not, since she treated him cruelly and unmercifully. She made him do all the hard and strenuous work, while her own son while away his time in plesure and enjoyment. Now this real son was a very kind one, and when he saw his step-brother working and slaving so hard, he had pity on him, and many times he had

approached his mother with a kind and generous word for the hard-working brother of his, but again and again, the mother paid no attention to him, and thus the son gave up, for he himself knew what a hard-hearted person his mother was.

The step-son worked hard, from early dawn till late afternoon and not for once did he receive a kind word for the step-mother. He worked on week afer week without complaining, faithfully and obediently with the hope that perhaps the mother would ease the hard labor. Instead she complained that he did not do enough, and she doubled his work. She was bitter against this sonk and for no reason whatsoever, except that she loved her own son dearly, and anyone's son was so much an animal.

The real son was very sorry for this step-brother of his and he wished that there was something that he could do, but unfortunately for him there was nothing that he could do at all. He saw his brother going early in the morning to the far away woods to chop the trees down and sell the wood. Once he got the notion that he would like to sneak away into the distant hills and work side by side with this unfortunate brother of his. But he knew that if his mother found out, she would punish the step-son even though it is the fault of her real son. So the son did not go over to the distant hills to work with his brother.

The hard working son made the acquaintance of a certain wood cutter, and this wood cutter was kind and understanding. The son poured out his trouble to him, telling him how cruel his step-mother was, and that he obeyed her because he promised his mother that he would obey his elders. The wood cutter said, "This can't go on forever, since heaven takes care of such cruel

people. I am sure that in the end this cruel mother of yours would not be happy at all."

Thus in this understanding and kind man the son had his only relief and consolement. He hoped for the end of this hard working labor. He thought often of his dead mother, and he would cry and cry, why he did not know, only that he was so unhappy and he did not like his step-mother. Even though the step-mother made him work so hard and so unfair, he did not hate her, for he was the kind that could not hate.

Now the step-son was unhappy all this time, but one day he was surprised to see his step-brother walking toward the woods.

"I'm going to help you with your work," he said. "I have been taking life too easy and a little work could not kill me, I am sure."

The hard working brother suspected that perhaps something was up. Even though he saw little of this brother yet he did not trust him. However he said nothing and the two brothers went on their way. For many days after this the two brothers worked side by side, but the mother did not know it.

Because there were two now, the boy did not have to work as fast as he used to do. Then one day the other boy did not come. That day the son could not chop the proper amount of wood. And when he got home that night, he took a terrific besting from his step-mother. The other brother looked on. He was going to utter that he had been helping his brother , but he did not because he knew that his mother would beat the boy more.

The brother went to his room, completely black and blue. Yet he took his beating like a man, and he did not complain at all.

At this time the mother thought that the son was going to work hard again, but the next day the same thing happened, and this time the mother gave the step-son another terrific beating.

The real son cannot stand this any longer, and he came forward and defended his step-brother, but the mother pushed him away and finally locked him in another room. The son took a terrific beating, and he was almost dead when the step-mother finally gave in. Then she took the half-dead body and carried it away into the terrible woods and left him there.

Back at the house the other brother felt sorry for the other boy. He was just about ready to confess now he helped his brother, but when he saw the anger and determination in the mother's eyes he refrained from saying anything.

Then later he found out that the other brother was thrown into the woods, and that his mother had left him there. There was nothing that the boy can do except to wait until morning.

In the woods the step-son was panting like an animal. His very last breath had seemed to gone away, but he knew that he was still alive. Everything was turning and vague, and he cannot see clearly, and there was a excrutiating pain in his head. Then everything became black and he did not remember anything more.

When morning came he found himself in the woods the sun shining brightly in his eyes. He was still weak from the beating of yesterday, but he was a little stronger, and he tried to get up, but was unable to do so. Soon the wood cutter passed and saw him and he said to him, "Your mother has beat you again."

The son nodded and said nothing.

The wood cutter said to him, "Why do you keep on doing this

kind of work. Your step-mother treats you too cruelly. If I were you, I would not do what she says."

The boy said, "When my mother died she told me to obey the elders and that I should not question the authority of the older people. Since then I have always obeyed the older people."

"But when they are so unfair, and so unjust, there must be something that could be done."

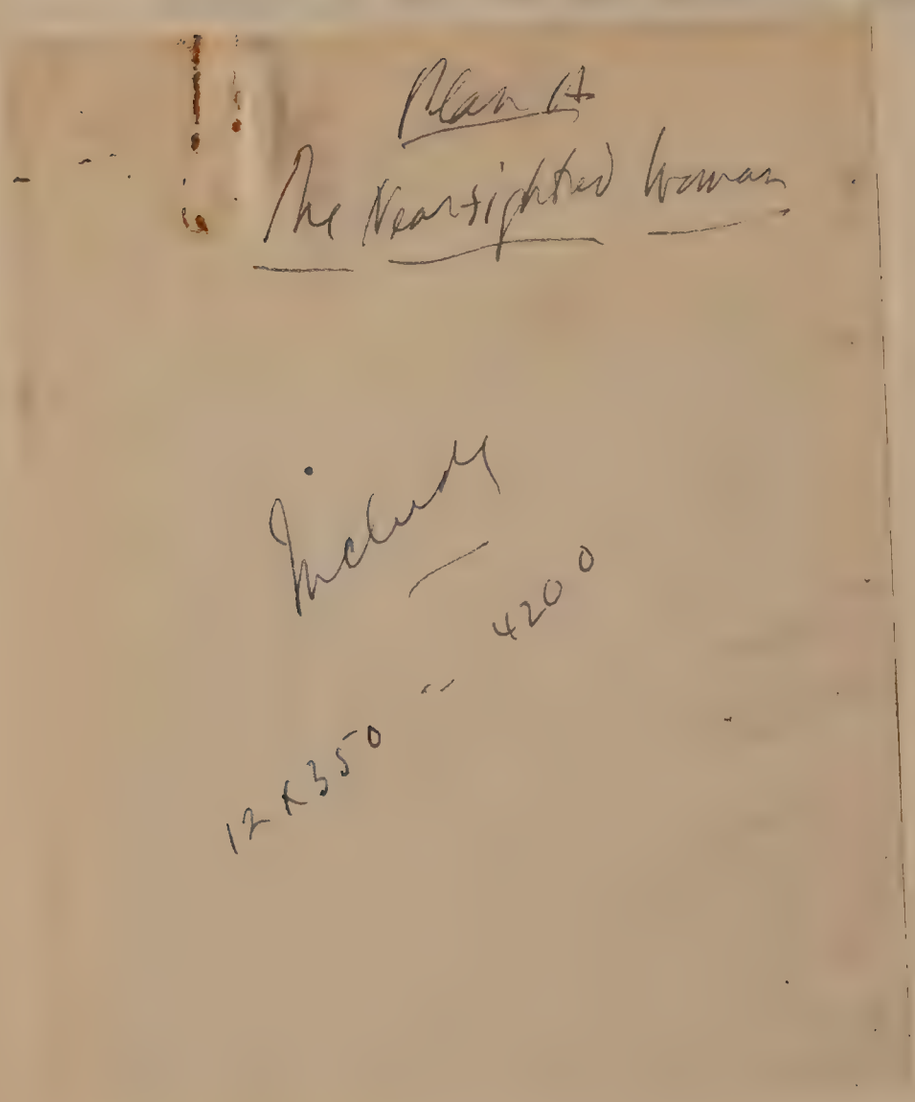
"I do not know," the boy said, "perhaps there is something that could be done."

Then the wood cutter took care of the boy, and when the boy was well, he went back to the house of the step-mother and when the step-mother saw him, she said, "You dare returned to this house, you good-for-nothing leafer." Then she took up her stick and chased after the boy and began to beat him again.

There was nothing that the boy could do, and he ran straight to the grave of his mother and there he wept and he wept until he fell asleep. In his dream he saw himself rising into the heavens and there he met his mother. Then quick as a wink the scene changed and he saw himself battling with a huge dragon. Then another scene and so on, and soon he woke up. Then near the grave he saw a sign that directed him toward a certain place. He followed it and soon he came upon a dark and deep tavern. There he saw a sign that told him to enter. This he did, and when he went inside he saw a long and panting dragon with an almost human look in his eyes. He took up a long stick and he was surprised to see himself with almost supernatural strength fighting the dragon. After a short fight the dragon was defeated. Then the boy saw a sign that told him to go home.

When he entered the house he saw that there was great excitement and the crowd was gathering around the house. He went inside and saw his step-mother laying down on the bed, dead. The step-son went forward and then he saw a look of the dragon which he just killed on his step-mother's face. Then a voice from up above said, "The dragon was your step-mother. You have killed her, because she deserves to be killed." The boy recognized the voice as that of his real mother.

After the death of the cruel mother the two brothers became closely attached to each other, and they loved each other dearly and sincerely, and the son would go to the grave of his real mother and thank the Gods that at last his cruel step-mother was no more.


Plan 4
The Nearsighted Woman
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Jon Lee rewrite

# The Near-sighted Woman

There is a very interesting story about the little wooden box in the corner of the room, a box used as a seat by an old near-sighted woman who works in the store. The little brown box is twenty inches high and wide, an almost perfect square, and because it has been sat on for almost fifteen years, it is now smooth and glistening like a shining mirror. For fifteen long years this box has always remained in the same place, at the left hand corner of the long table where old women pick shrimps, and during this long period of time, it has never been moved except for the times when the floor is washed, but it is always put back at the same place.

It seems strange for me to look at this box in the midst of the store, for it is out of place, and whenever I look at it, I always have a strong desire to take it out to the back yard and chop it into firewood. The history of the box is almost as interesting as the woman who sits on it.

She is an old myopic woman who lives down the street one block away, and every morning at nine she comes to the store ~~alone~~, walking slowly on the street, and I can always tell who is at the door by her regular slow footsteps which echoes through the street, a steady pushing sound as if she were dragging her feet along instead of walking. She comes into the store and at once makes her way to the corner and sits on the little wooden box ready to go to work. If the shrimps come back late, she sits in her corner, almost rigid, so quiet

is she, her eyes open, but without any movement, staring out into space. I have studied her many times, always wondering how it is that she has been picking shrimps for fifteen long years, always sitting on the same box, in the same corner, never missing a day of work. As far as I know, the greatest amount of money she has ever earned in one day is a little over a dollar during these fifteen years, and it was on a day when work had to be rushed, and she worked until eleven at night. At that time her eyes were still good, and there was little difficulty for her. Then slowly, steadily, due to long years of this tedious work, her eyesight began to fail until now today, she is almost blind, but she continues to pick shrimps just with the feel of the hands. During the five years that I have been down at the store, the most money that the myopic woman has ever earned daily is forty-five cents. Often I have wondered at the slight amount she receives, and how she is able to get along these many years with so little money.

And sometimes when I look at her, I have a sort of admiration for her, for she is eighty years old, but still strong and sturdy as ever except for her weak eyes, and her voice is full and rich.

All day long I could hear her loud voice discussing the gossip, the news of the day, with the other old woman who come to the store daily.

The store is a very interesting place, and at the same time, a very odd place, peculiar because it does not look like a store. The outside of the building is built of white

plaster, but inside, all the rooms are built of wood. The room known as the store is fifteen by twenty feet, and it is painted in a dull green color. On one corner there is a large ice box, and along one side of the wall, there is a long table where the workers do their daily task. The store is a frequent meeting place where people come and go, where daily gossips are exchanged, where all new marriages and births are discussed freely and without any care of being overheard.

It fact the store is a regular meeting place where friends come to talk, to dine, and to work. During the five years that I have been down there, I have seen a vast ~~quantity~~ crowd of people come and go, but the one who is always there, the one who never misses a day is the old near-sighted woman. Perhaps to her dying day she will be there. She was the first worker in the store when it started, sitting in her little corner, on the little brown box. Since then, she has always sat there, and she will not change the box for a more comfortable chair. Her favorite position is with her back against the wall, on the left hand side of the table, and despite the many times the store has been renovated, she still manages to have her back against the wall, sitting on the left side of the table.

I have seen her there so often, that once when there was no work for the workers to do, I missed her, and I had a feeling that part of the room was gone, and that something was missing in the room. During the last five years the whole store has undergone many changes. For when my uncle bought the store, and we moved in to live with him, the whole place was like a

intricate beehive, so complicated were the rooms arranged. In order to have any comfort, it was necessary to rebuild many rooms, and to tear down whole sections of walls. At that time there were about twelve workers, all women. Then as the years went by, one by one they began to go away until today there are only three left. Everyone of the three women wears the old-fashioned Chinese clothes, consisting of a heavy black cloak, and black trousers. Of these three, two are comparatively new workers, and the third one, the near-sighted woman has been there long before we moved in.

When we first came to the store, we saw the strangest group of women that we have ever seen together. One was a large heavy woman with feet so small that it appeared no larger than a pinhead. There was also a strange woman who played with water every night. There was also a young woman, the fastest worker in the store. Now everyone one of these had gone away, and new ones had come to take their places.

But the near-sighted woman is still there, still sitting in the box, in her little corner, gossiping, laughing, with apparently no worries in her mind.

I can remember the countless stories she told me about China, and how her eyes always gleamed when she mentioned her homeland.

"You must go back to China sometime," she said to me once. "You who are born here do not know what your own country is like. Many of you think of it as a land of poverty and

suffering. It is true that there are poverty and bitterness in every land, but there is also the other side, the big cities and towns, the temples, the beauty of the land." Whenever she talked about China, there was a far away look in her eyes, and frequently I wondered if she longs to go back, and when she would be able to do so.

The three old women in the store are old, and often they give advice to the young ones. But what I like most of all is to listen to them tell me stories of my homeland, and through them I am able to visualize to a certain degree what China is like.

Once, the myopic old woman said, "If I have to pick shrimps everyday, the time passes away very quickly. Even if I do not make much money, at least I have some one to talk to, and the day would not linger on as though it would never end."

The three women gather at the store more for companionship rather than to make money for a living. They know they could not support themselves with the small amount of money they make, but they come and pass the time away in gossip and talk.

The only one who works for money is the old myopic woman, and now since her sight is almost completely lost, she does not make as money as she used to. She is the only support of her son, an unmarried man of fifty years of age. With the exception of a few dollars which she gets from a certain charity association, all the money she earns is used for support of her home.

The old myopic woman always carries an umbrella, and she uses this umbrella as a guiding cane, poking it along the street to find her way. She always says that she is afraid that perhaps it may rain, or that the sun is too hot for comfort.

I have seen her often walking slowly through the street, her son leading her by the hands. I always recognize them from far away for they always wear the same clothes, the mother with her black Chinese cloak and trousers, the son with his old suit and a dirty brown cap covering his long black hair.

On the head of the woman there is a wide black band tied securely at the back with a faded gold pin. Two faded earrings pierced her ears. Her face is wrinkled with age, but there still lingers that color of healthy life so uncommon in one so old. Her hair is a white silvery color, with streaks of blackness near the ears and neck. She is very healthy and is never sick. Except for the time when there is no work to do, she is always at the store, missing only one day of work in the fifteen years that she has been picking shrimps.

When she comes into the store, she goes immediately to her corner, and once she sits down, she never leaves her seat until it is time for her to go home. She sits on the little brown box from nine in the morning until four in the afternoon when it is time for her son to come and take her home. Sometimes when the son is unable to come for her, she goes home with the other two woman. She cannot go home alone, for she cannot see well. And in the late afternoon when I hear her slow footsteps echoing in the street I often wonder how

she spend her evenings at home with no one near her except her only son, and I wonder too if she is ever lonely living such a routine life for so long a period of time. Now this old near-sighted woman is the only one of the three women who really has a hard time getting along. Her husband does not work, for he is old. The son does no work for he is unable since he is always sick.

The woman lives in a tiny basement, and the rent is two dollars a month. Sometimes, when she cannot afford to pay for rent, the landlord let it go for that month. Lately because of her eyes, she gets one dollar and twenty-nine cents a week from a relief orgainization.

Frequently her friends have suggested to her that she should go to a home for the aged where she can spend the last years of her life in peace and comfort. But she does not want to leave her son, even though he never works or takes care of the home. The only thing he does is to prepare the evening rice for the mother when she goes home from work.

I have seen the son often. He comes into the store in the afternoon about two or three, bringing with him two pieces of cookies or cakes for his old mother. Sometimes he brings two or three cigarettes to her, and she always smiles and thanks him for what he brings to her.

During the five years that I have seen him come and go, he always wears the same shoes, the same suit, the same cap. He has never worked in his life, and his mother has always supported him, and even today when she is almost totally blind, she sits in her corner, slowly picking shrimps, and when she

makes enough money, she always saves it for him. She dearly loves this boy of hers, and she always gets a genuine pleasure from him when he asks her for money.

This woman lived a life of poverty and great distress, and never in her life was she really in possession of enough money to get the comforts of life. She was married in America to a hard working man who made his living in the laundry business. Then the years went by, and extreme necessity made her sell her children with the exception of two which she chose to keep for herself. And she did not know at that time that the two she chose from the group were the two most useless ones. The other children that were sold are now very well off, and living in the country, not knowing that the old myopic woman who sits in the corner ~~of~~ in our store is their mother.

The two children whom she kept were a little boy and girl. The boy is the grown up useless son. The little girl married and died a few years ago. When she was alive, she had a bad reputation of being very careless in her personal appearance and in her home affairs.

Once when I was talking with this near-sighted woman, she said, "A person's life is very strange. There seems to be some sort of fate in it. I have found out from lon experience that no matter how clever a person may be, if he has no luck, then his life has a way of tangling itself into an intricate mess. He will have all kinds of disadvantages. Others who are not as clever or intelligent as him will find their life an easy one for they have luck. The most important thing in life is luck."

"Do you think that your life of hard uncessing work the result of bad luck?" I asked her once.

"Of course," she said emphatically, "My husband and I have always worked hard, but because neither one of us is blessed with"luck from the sky" we have never been able to lead an easy life. We Chinese call this luck, "tin choy," and unless one has it, a person always lives a life of work and poverty."

The husband when he was young, sewed clothes and expensive silk gowns. Before he was married, he ~~used~~ managed to save a great deal of money which was finally spent in time of desperate need. When it was necessary to sell the children, neither the father nor mother desired to do it, but they decided that it was better to place the children in homes of wealthy parents than to let them starve to death. Everyone of the children that were sold, were bought when they were little babies, and perhaps even today they do not know that they are the children of this old woman.

The years have come and gone, and during all this time the myopic woman sits in her corner, picking shrimps the whole day long, hoping for the day when perhaps some luck may come to her so that she may have enough money to live in peace for the rest of her life. Until that happens, she will continue to remain in her little world, in the little corner, with her back to the wall, sitting on the little brown box, picking shrimps, earning her forty cents a day.

Sometimes when new workers come to the store to work, they complain about the work and how little they make, and how

their backs ache and pain caused by the long hours of sitting down, how their eyes hurt by constant straining. On days when the shrimps are very small, these new workers complain bitterly, saying, "How could anyone pick such shrimps? They are no bigger than pinheads." This constant complaining always infuriates the near-sighted woman, and always she says, "You young generation takes life too easily. Look at me. I have sit here for fifteen years, and I have picked large and small shrimps, never complaining once. When the shrimps are good and large, I am able to get more money. When they are small, I pick them without complaint. We old women never complain, it is you young ones who do not as yet know what life means." And when she finishes, the others are quiet, feeling suddenly ashamed of themselves.

This old woman has very strong and sensitive ears. Whenever a customer comes into the store, and there is no one outside, she will yell out loudly, "Customer is here," and her strong full voice echoes through the house.

The only happiness that this woman has, I think, is her undying love and devotion for her worthless son. Whenever she talks to him, her voice is gentle and soft, as if she is talking to a little child. While the son is not married, even though he is fifty years of age, his face appears much younger. Young in the sense that it does not look like the face of an old man. His hair is dark black with no sign of grayness. His face is a muddy brown due to constant smoking of opium pipes to ease his strange malady which he has suffered for the major part of his life.

makes enough

Frequently he becomes sick, and during his period of illness, usually ranging from one day to almost a week, the mother stays home and takes care of him, coming to work in the late afternoon with a next door neighbor leading her by the hand.

Sometimes for one whole day the near-sighted woman sits in her corner, saying nothing. She sits alone, unconscious of anyone around her, softly chanting a peculiar and weird Chinese song.

One time I said to her, "What are you singing?" Then suddenly she would startle as if she had ~~woke~~ wakened from a dream.

"Oh, just an old Chinese song," she said. Then she continued to pick her shrimps, no more singing after my interruption.

Due to the long years of doing the same work, the woman has acquired a good sense of weight. Whenever she finishes picking her shrimps, she holds up the pan and guesses the amount which she thinks is the correct amount. And always she comes very close to the actual weight.

When she finishes with her work, she picks up the pans and slowly feeling her way, she goes into the kitchen to wash the pans. Then she dries them with a clean white cloth, and comes out into the store again. Once when no one was watching her, she went out into the street, and I had to go out and bring her in again, leading her to her seat in the corner.

And she said, "Alas, a blind person is of no use whatsoever." And she would then wait until the son comes to call for her, or else go home with the other women.

And thus this life goes on for the past fifteen years. Year in, year out, the old mother sits in her corner, making

money to support this grown up son of hers. Once in awhile he comes into the store and asks his mother for fifty cents to cut his hair, and the ### mother always gives it to him, economizing somewhere else to make up for the fifty cents.

The old woman eats only one meal a day, the evening meal. She eats no breakfast, no lunch. People often bring her food, and she takes them home with her.

Countless days I have wondered how long she is going on like this. And sometimes I feel a poignant ###### pain to see her working so hard, doing her best to support her son in the sunset of her life when she really should spend her time in rest and comfort.

I 11

We have mentioned the near-sighted woman indirectly or directly in many of our stories, and yet we have yet not written a story of herself, and what she does, and about her family. We have only been down the store there for about four years, and at the very beginning, the store was a grand success. Lately, due to depression and what nots, it is not going as well as it ought to.

Since then, four years ago, the store had seen people come and people go, but the one who remains there permanently, and perhaps forever to her dying day, is the old near-sighted woman. When the store first started she was there, sitting in her corner, on a box which is now smooth as satin, because of constant sitting. She has always sat on that box, and she would absolutely not change it for a more comfortable chair. She sits in her favorite corner right against the wall. During our four years there the store has undergo many changes. For when we first moved in, the whole place was like a beehive, and the rooms were small and uncomfortable, thereby making it necessary to tear the whole place down, almost, and to change it all over. And even then it is not so good, but very much better than originally.

At that time there were at least twelve ~~ster~~ workers there, all of them are women. Then little by little they began to go away, until today there are only three old, very old women. And everyone ~~is~~ wears the old-fashioned Chinese costume. Two of the old women are working here during the past two years. But the third one, the near-sighted women, had been there long before we moved into the store. And during our four years there

the old myopic woman had only missed one day of work. We used to have work there every single day except Sunday. But during the last two years, the women worked every other day and sometimes two times a week.

When we first moved into the store, we saw the strangest group of women we had ever seen in our lives. There was one who is very fat, and with feet smaller than a pin head. There was the strange woman who played with water. There was a young woman, the fastest worker in the whole store. Then there was the old myopic woman. Everyone of these women had gone away, and new ones had come to take their places. But the near-sighted woman is still there.

You can go in any day when she is working, and you see her sitting there in the corner, her eyes opened, but unable to see anything, for during the last two or three months she become practically blind. But she picks her shrimps as well as anyone could, although she is very slow. The largest amount of money she has ever made in one day during the last four years is forty cents. If she gets more than thirty cents a day now, she considers herself as extremely luckly.

The three old women in the store now are old. And once one of them said, "If I ~~had~~ have some shrimps to pick the day passes away very quickly. Even if I do not make any money, at least the time would pass, and not linger as though it would never end. Usually at home all the young folks would go out and I would be alone. Then the day is very hard to bear."

All three of them probably hold the same point of view.

They know that they could not support the selves with just picking shrimps, but they come and pass their time away

in gossip and talk.

The old myopic woman always carries an umbrella, rain or shine. She uses the umbrella like a cane, to poke around here and there to find her way. Although she always said that she was afraid that perhaps it might rain, or that the sun was too hot.

We used to see her walking slowly through the street, her son leading her by the hands. Although she lives but one block away she would take at least ten minutes to reach the store, for she walks very slow, very slow indeed.

She would come in the morning with another worker, and they would reach the store about nine, and she would slowly make her way to her box and favorite corner. There she would sit until it is time to work.

She has a black band across her forehead, and over her ears there are two faded golden earrings. Her voice is loud and full, not like that of an aged old woman at all. She seems very healthy, and probably she would live for quite a time yet.

Once she sits down on her box she would never leave it. She sits there for hours, picking, picking until she finishes. Then she would pick up her pans and slowly make her way to the kitchen sink, where she washes the pan with warm water. Then she would slowly make her way out again, and sometimes she would miss her way and go way out into the street, and there we would have to lead her in again.

After she collects her money she would go home with the other two women, or else her son would come and take her home. She could not go home alone, for she could not see well.

Now this son that the woman has could not do any work. He suffers from a strange malady, and many times his breath would give forth strange sounds, with difficulty in breathing. And he takes opium now and then to relieve himself.

Now this near-sighted woman is the only one of the three in the store who really has a hard time in getting along. Her husband does not work, for he is old. The son does no work for he is unable. She is the only one. She lives in a basement and the rent is two dollars a month. She gets charity from a certain organization, and lately because of her eys, she gets one dollar and twenty-nine cents a week from a certain relief agency. But you could see that it is quite hard for her to get along.

Many times people suggest that she ought to go to an old women's home. If she is alone, she would probably have gone long ago. But she does not want to leave this son of hers. Even though he is a good for nothing.

We saw him many times, quite regularly too. He would come into the store around half past two or three. He wears a gray dull cap on his head, and his hair appears as though it always needs cutting. His poor near-sighted mother is his whole support. He absolutely does nothing at all, for he could not. He is unmarried, and he is almost fifty years of age.

His mother is near eighty now.

This woman lives a very strange life. All her life she had suffered from poverty, and not for once ~~and~~ she ever could be called well off. She married in America and had many children. Then due to extreme necessity she sold all her children except two. Out of her whole group of children she

~~chose~~ chose the two best. And in the end the two best proved to be ~~two~~ the most useless ones. The other children that were sold off are now very well off and living in the country.

The two children that the woman kept are a little boy and a little girl. The boy is the grown up useless son. The little girl married and died a few years ago. She ~~is~~ was known to be a very dirty person. Oh no. Not that. But dirty in the sense she ~~is~~ was never clean. Her whole person, her house, her children ~~are~~ were all untidy and very filthy in appearance.

The woman never speaks about her children that were sold so long ago, and one of the girls that was sold is still in Oakland today with a very bad reputation, after marrying three husbands, and living with this and that man.

The woman blames her ill luck in life on account of bad luck.

Now the Chinese are a most peculiar people, and their outlook on life is very strange too. Once I heard this woman saying, "No matter how clever a person may be, no matter how well off he is, if that person has no luck, then things would work out to his disadvantage. The most important thing in life is luck." And the other old women would nod their heads and agreed with her.

Many will disagree with this theory. Perhaps many will agree.

Now the husband of this woman when he was young sewed clothes and expensive silks gowns. And since he had a big family he could not very well save a great deal of money. And whatever he saved was finally spent in time of desperate need.

The woman didn't want to sell her children, but she could

not help it since she could not afford to take care of them and since it is better to sell them than let them starve to death. Most of the children ~~are~~ were sold when they were quite small. So they know nothing of what had happened to them even now. But the chances are that they do know.

Once I heard the near sighted woman say, "A daughter who does nothing to take care of his mother is not good."

It happened that day the old women were talking about a girl who ran away from home and disgraced her family.

Now this daughter who married many husbands knews that this old near-sighted woman is her mother bu t she does nothing to care for her. And the mother knows that the daughter knows who she is. Many times we have heard the mother telling about the worthlessness of this girl, and she does not mentioned that she is her daughter, and none of the workers in the store about about it. But we did find out from someone that that girl is her daughter.

We have seen that girl many times, although now she is a woman. She powders her face with a thick layer of powder and rouge. She is very fat, and not too beautiful either. But her eyes shine like that of a woman who could live and love fully. She is always in the companionship of a young girl, and this young girl is her daughter, and who is really beautiful.

Not for once did this fat daughter for her mother, and yet perhaps it is not her fault. Her mother had sold her when she was a child, and now she does not think that she owes anything to her at all.

The old mother works in the store year after year, sitting

in her corner, picking all day long and when business was good long ago, she worked way into the night.

Sometimes the new workers would come and they would complain that this is hard work, and they would have to sit all day long and make but a few cents. And they would complain that their backs and hands ache. This one woman always said, "This young generation takes things too easy. Hard work they could not stand. Look at us. We sit here year in and year out, always. They would sit for one day and complain. Look at our long years here."

This old woman knows a lot of stories, about this and that, and she would tell them to us in her leisure time, smoking away on a bull durnam (misspelled I am sure) while we listened.

Her son would sometimes bring in the afternoon ~~tew~~ two cupcakes and two doughnuts. And when he comes into the store the old mother would know, for she immediately would recognize ~~her~~ his footsteps. Then the son would take out the cakes and cookies right from his pocket and hand them over to his mother. And the mother would chew the cakes and cookies in her teethless mouth.

All her life this old mother had worked, and her life is a hard one, always trying moments of hardship. She does not know a single word of English except the words yes and no. She could know footsteps very accurately. Sometime a when customer comes into the store and there is no one to wait on him, the old near-sighted woman would yell out, "Customer is here." And her strong voice would echo right into the kitchen and bedrooms.

And we come right out and sell whatever the customer wishes.

This group of old women in the store knows all the latest gossip, and the scandal, how we do not know. But you can be sure that if anything important happens in the city of Oakland they would know it.

This woman loves this worthless son of hers with a great devotion, and she would talk to him just like a child, although the son is a big old man. And even though the son is fifty, his slender built and his face appears much younger. Sometimes the son would come into the store, and he would hand over two or three cigarettes to his mother. For this old mother smokes a great deal.

And thus this life goes on like this. Year in, year out, the old mother sits in her corner, making money to support this grown up son of hers. The son makes no attempt to support the old mother, for he could not even if he wanted to. Sometimes, once in a very great while, he would come to the mother and asks her for fifty cents to cut his hair. And fifty cents is a great deal of money to this old woman. But she would let her son have it, and she would try to economize in something else to make up for the fifty cents spent.

The old mother eats but one meal a day, and that is the evening meal. She eats no breakfast and no lunch. Sometimes people would bring her foods, and she would accept them with thanks.

And this woman would go on like this forever until her dying day. Come to the store sometimes and you would see her in the corner, and perhaps a sob would come into your

throat and tear into your eyes.

For here is a mother supporting her sons in the sunset of her life when she should really rest and enjoy her last days.

Then, to this old woman, our very humble appreciation and respect.

One day a man comes into the store and he says, "I have some very good soap for sale. Very cheap and reasonable." And he takes out some samples and shows them to me.

"How much does it cost?" I ask.

He says, "These are five cents. The powder is ten cents a box." I call my mother out and tell her about the soap.

My mother comes out, and she looks at the soap.

"What kind of soap is it?" my mother ~~eks~~ ask.

"Sweetheart soap," I tell her.

"Is it good soap?"

"I think so," I say.

My mother picks up the soap and smells it.

"It smells good," she tells me.

I pick up the soap and smell it.

"Yes, it does smell sweet."

My mother tells me, "Ask the man if he can sell the soap cheap if I buy a large amount."

My mother tells that to me in Chinese, and I have to translate it in English to the man who sells soap.

"Can you sell the soap cheap?" I tell the man in English.

"The soap is five cents straight," he tells me.

So in Chinese I tell my mother, "The soap is five cents straight."

My mother thinks for a few minutes. "Well," she says, "I take three bars anyway."

The workers in the store say, "I like to see some soap."

I bring some soap and show them to the workers. The near-sighted woman in the corner says, "I like to buy some soap too."

I tell the man in English, "The old Chinese women would like to buy some soap."

"Oh, sure," he says. "How many do they want?"

I ask the near-sighted woman in Chinese, "The man wants to know how much do you want?"

"I want ~~to~~ two bars," she says to me.

"She wants two bars," I translate to the man.

The man takes out two bars of soap. The near-sighted woman puts her hands in her pockets, and takes out one dime.

The other woman takes three bars.

The man says, "I give you this box of powder free."

"Thanks," I say.

He smiles, and then he gathers up his things and leaves.

He goes out into the street, pulling his wagon filled with soap.

The near-sighted woman says, "This soap is sweet."

She picks up the soap and smells it for a long time.

Then she puts it away, and continues to pick her shrimps.

There is a general motor display down at the Oakland Auditorium today. I decide to go.

It is seven o'clock now, and I decide to go about seven thirty so I will be in time for the KLX amateur show.

To make a short cut, I ~~went~~ go toward the Alameda tube, and cut across the Seventh Street Park. It is very dark tonight. On Seventh Street near Alice a man stops me. He looks at me, strecking out his hands.

"A nickel for a cup of coffee. I'm hungry. Just one nickel, please." There is a weak hungry look in his eyes.

He looks at me, pleadingly, hoping I will give him something. I take out a dime. His eyes shine.

"Thank you, Chinaboy," he says, "thank you, Chinaboy."

I start to go. He calls back to me, "Do you want a nickel change?"

I shake my head. He calls me again, "Thank you, Chinaboy."

I walk down the street to the electric automobile show at the Auditorium.

The Auditorium is crowded with many people. There are many new cars all around, Buicks, La Salles, and many other important cars. Del Courtney and his band is playing I'm Putting all my eggs in one Basket, from the picture Follow The Fleet, starring Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers. The band is swinging the tune in rhythm. A young man is singing.

I stand with the crowd looking up, waiting for the amateur show to start.

Eight o'clock comes. Mr. Ken Steward, the master of ceremonies comes out and says, "I like to remind the radio audience and you who are here that this amateur show is coming to you from the Oakland Municipal Auditorium. This show is strictly an amateur show. All the contestants are amateurs. For this reason I want you to give them your undivided attention, and give this boys and girls a decent break. That's all we ask of you. Some of the contestant are shaking in the knees.

"Tonight winner of the first prize will compete with the winners of the previous nights, and every night up to this Friday, in the grand final to be held here on Saturday.

The grand prize on Saturday is one hundred dollars in cash, and in addition to that, a one week's engagement with Del Courtney's orchestra in the Bal Tabarin in San Francisco."

The crowds sighs deeply.

Mr. Ken Steward continues, "And the second prize for Saturday is fifty dollars in cash."

The crowds sighs again.

He continues, "We have no judges here. We don't depend on the human ear to judge who is better than who. We have the famous John Mansfield applause meter which is scientifically correct. It cannot make mistakes, it is absolutely accurate. Now, we have the first amateur."

He calls out the name, and a young girl steps out.

She sings a beautiful song from an opera. The audience applauds.

The minutes go by, one by one.

A blind boy wins the first prize of twenty-five dollars.

A girl wins the second prize of fifteen dollars. A young handsome boy win the third prize of ten dollars. The show is over. I go home with a friend of mine.

Today a man comes into the store. He says, "I want something to eat, anything."

I tell my mother in Chinese, "A man outside wants something to eat."

"Get him some bread," my mother says, "and two oranges."

I go to get the bread and two oranges. I give them to the man. He says, "Thank you." He goes outside.

My mother says, "There are always man like this coming

in and asking for food or money. They must think this is the Salvation Army."

My mother goes into the kitchen. I stay out in the door enjoying the sunshine.

The old woman who picks shrimps says, "The shrimps today are small. The company in San Francisco is cheating again. Tell your mother about it. She ought to telephone and schld the company for sending over such small shrimps."

My mother says, "The last two or three days the company in the city is mixing the very small shrimps with the large ones. I will telephone them today."

She telephones, and I hear this.

"Hello, this is the Sam Lee Company in Oakland. Why are you sending such small shrimps over the last few days? We don't want them anymore if you continue to do so."

Then there is a silence.

My mother hangs up. She comes out and says, "They are sending some big ones over tomorrow."

The old near-sighted woman smiles.

The Salvation Army Headquarters for selling used furniture and dresses is located on Sixth and Webster. Right next door is the relief quarters. I see old and ragged men standing in line waiting everyday. What they are waiting for I do not know. Some carry bags in the hands. Others wait there in silence. Mostly they are foreign people, and some negroes. They are all poor.

I walk by everyday and I see this people. I know that I

don't want to stand in a line like that.

Sometimes I walk by and the man look at me, staring at me. I walk by fast, so they can't see me. I never walk on that side of the street anymore.

Saturday and Angkeen Warren, one of my few friends comes to see me.

He says, "Let's go over to San Francisco tomorrow."

"I haven't been to San Francisco for a long time. About seven years now," I tell him.

He looks surprised. He laughs.

"Seven years?"

"Yes," I tell him again.

He still does not believe.

But I know it's more than five or six years.

"Where shall we go?" I ask.

"To the Golden Gate Park, and then we can take in a show."

"What time?"

"About noon. I have to cook rice for my family first."

"Sure," I ~~said~~ say. "I wonder what Frisco looks like now."

"Let's go to the Palace of Legion of honor to look at Van Gogh's paintings."

"You know the place?"

"I think so. My art teacher told me to go."

"Well, maybe I'll go," I ~~said~~ say.

"I'll come and call you tomorrow."

"Sure."

I am anxiously waiting to see Frisco again. After seven year. I'm going to have some fun while I'm still young.

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